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The DOUBLE DEALER

".....I can deceive them both by speaking the truth."

ANNIVERSARY!



ITH this, the January, 1922, issue, Vol. 3, No. 13, of *THE DOUBLE DEALER* is given the world. On this, his first natal anniversary, Messire Double Dealer, with due Gargantuan bounce, holds jubilee. Holiday kept, ox roasted, and killed the fatted calf, "let galled jade wince" the while he wassails. (See lexicon.)

Though to crow before one is out of the wood, spells certain mishap to Flutter and family, becomes to Sir Strut and ilk quite the proper side. "Truth to tell," says Messire Double Dealer, "I *am* a bit of a strutter, or so I have been told, nonetheless I have the right air, you know, and really try, as you will, my good fellow, you'll turn a brave trick to pigeon me. Sired by Master Congreve, dammed by Mistress Grundy, dight cap and bells, I stalk 'Bozartian Sahara' in jaunty unconcern, not always unaware of my hierarchaic manner."

Continuing, albeit flippantly, says Messire Double Dealer: "One Cabell, you will recall, did herald my nativity in Pharisea thuswise:

"'From actual criticism the unborn share with the dead in exemption (although because of, to be sure, more cheery and less immutable reasons), so that, in either case, the bystander's role

can only be that of tacit hopefulness. *THE DOUBLE DEALER*, after all, is committed to sink or swim by virtue of its own inherent virtues. Such was metaphor of the prologue to your Congrevean namesake, you will remember, nor can I imagine any more true and tonic avowal as herald for the second *DOUBLE DEALER*'s outset.'

"Well, my good fellow, what do you make of this? (That is if you are still with us.) Zounds, what an ass it is! And this minds me of a certain saw attributed to one Rojas: 'There is no place so high that an ass laden with gold cannot reach it.' Now to be sure, 'that isn't the thing real people believe nowadays,' moreover lettered asses bear no golden burdens.

Says Mr. Cabell pertinently: "Man alone of all animals plays the ape to his dreams." Says Messire Double Dealer, impertinently, "although because of, to be sure," etc.: "Man alone of all animals plays the ass to his schemes." Which is boomerang to the buoyant and more especially to perpetrators of such pleasantries as the paper in hand. But was it Stevenson who muttered somewhere in his "aniana" and later q. v. in our columns: "Give me the man who has brains enough to make a fool of himself." Substitute "fool" for "ass," if you are pedant, though the twain are synonymous, and you have it. What respite to limelighters!

But all this runs foul or amuck or as you will of subject in hand, the which is "Anniversary." Taking down Britanica, A—Aro, one notes that first anniversaries (hymeneal) are observed by suitable gifts to the anniversarees in paper. Paper! Let Messire Double Dealer speak for himself: "My good friends, on this the first anniversary of my rebirth into Phariseea—as Hymen dubs it: paper anniversary—what more fitting token of gratitude can I exhibit to you who have tendered unto me this gift of virgin paper than the penning hereupon of these burning words, snatched from the cauldron of my conceptor, Master Congreve's fiery cerebellum—*'A plague on both your houses!'*"

Oscar, show the gentleman out!



PARADE REST!

ABOUT this disarmament business authorities differ widely. Mr. Will Irwin, the well known publicist of *Saturday Evening Post* renown, regards it as the last chance of civilization. He threatens the world with annihilation unless it grows mystically hopeful toward the Disarmament Conference and reads his book, "The Next War."

My opinion of the matter? I can do no better than quote from my bellwether address to the Bridlegoose Club at its annual meeting. Here it is: "Brothers Bridlegeese, they are talking in high places of disarming the Powers. They speak of junking war and its horrid engines of destruction. Let us presume to probe a little deeper than the minds of

these gentlemen concerned in important affairs allow them the liberty of doing. First of all, is war primarily interested in weapons? Not on your expectancy! A fighter uses whatever is handy. Deprived of his sword he will arm himself with a shillelah; his issue Springfield withdrawn he will kick you with his hobnails, he will pull your hair. Maces, Tomahawks, Trenchmortars, Brownings, Gatlings, Viper and Lewisite Gas, Greek Fire or the convex mirror of Archimedes, what are all these without the good love of the sport which turns them to advantage? War is engendered in the jungle old human heart, not in these little playthings. Can we change our nature? Brothers Bridlegeese, I ask you to consider the crowds that follow the limousines of Foch and Diaz; to take note of the lead soldiers which little Clarence abandons all his more peaceful games to demolish with a glorious salvo of paper artillery. "The Birth of a Nation" was the most successful cinematograph show ever screened. It depicted slaughter, rapine, assault and race prejudice. Shall we recruit our hosts of peace-loving, amiable citizens from the ninety thousand who pawn their overcoats to see Dempsey knock the daylights out of the Frenchman, or from the millions who swell the circulation of our morning libel sheets to read in seventy-five centimeter type of Fatty Arbuckle's foibles? Perhaps the vanguard of the new civilization will be led by the three hundred thousand Ku Klux Klansmen and their Kleagles. Consider again, Brothers, the female. Her new beau ideal will be the little man who thinks twice before he speaks. The tall, blustering male will no longer appeal to

her. It is to giggle. For she stands to-day, yea say, nay say, where her prototype stood, on the Trojan walls surveying the warriors, wondering sore perplexed that her brothers come not to the fray at Troyland. I fear she does, I fear she always will.

"Since when have they learned to manufacture from a sow's ear, a silk purse? Each summer the Chatauquas perspire, exalted by Coca-Cola, to make this world a better place, but old Dean Swift knew better. Yet Don Quixote remains the symbol of perennial man and every day Childe Roland to the dark tower comes.

"'Peace,' says Kolniyatsch, 'is a period between two wars.' There is a fatal regularity about the process. The present craze for stacking arms will end in a glorious flourish. Again the nations will invoke their terrible god, poor men will go forth proud in shoddy and brass buttons; rich men will patriotically blackmail their employes for government loans; women will dispute military titles as they knit their wool; and war, the authentic pastime of man, will return."



ROUGE AND THE BLUE NOSES

DURING our lucid intervals, blind to the mirage of a "noble view" of life, we readily believe with Bojer that "all human pleasure only consists in forgetting the dangers always lying in wait for us," or with plucky R. L. S. that "we are fairly happy so long as we are not distinctly aware of being miserable."

Stripped of all our polite perversions, we are ready to admit that we live from day to day for one purpose: to squeeze out of life what happiness, what comfort, what rest, we can. We all have our peculiar slants. What is happiness for me is not happiness for you. But both of us want just what we think happiness is, *and* we want it *now*. We don't, if the truth were confessed, plan our days for any happiness that may come to us once we ferry over with old Sharon. Even our good friends, the parsons, show some anxiety to secure for themselves the comfortable manse, the small congregation, and the liveable salary. What joy remains for us beyond the pale, we'll take gladly enough, but not because we expect it. In the meantime we'll squeeze our rock here, assiduously, for the drippings.

Ergo. Suffer us our illusions for to-day. Today passes all too speedily. Bluenoses, avaunt! Take your blue laws with you! Rouge, attend! Help us forget the pallor of hours! Pink the cheeks of our little miseries! Quicken us with the joy of your laughing abandoned red! Let us not be cheated out of fleeting happiness by the empty conventions of Bluenoses!

At best, life is a business we are all apt to mismanage. Who of us knows the right way to live? Who of us are so certain we know, that we dare compel our neighbor to live *our* way? Bluenose with his laws? Rouge with her license? *Is there a right way?* "Belief is merely a matter of taste." "Conventions are all a question of which particular ones we use." "Shame is only a combination of vanity with moral

cowardice." We can never know surely. Can Bluenose make the world happier with his pathetic ban on booze, tobacco, short-skirts, corsetless torsos, cheek to jowl dancing, peeping breasts, bobbed hair, movies on Sunday, halfway houses, Sabbath newspapers? Can he make the world happier by dragging the reluctant to dominies who indicate their obligation to Sunday vaudeville shows by trying to fashion their services after them? Rouge says "No!" Can Rouge make the world happier with her ban on Bluenoses? Bluenose says—but who is Bluenose?

Bluenose is not a friend of law and order for the common good. Bluenose is the personification of the word, *verboten*. Bluenose thrives on frigid formulas and meaningless regulations. Bluenose is tyranny. If he were a little less than tyranny, Rouge might not attract and irritate him so. Bluenose is extreme beyond humanness. Were he less extreme, we might not find so much joy exclusively in Rouge, we might look to his cerulean beak with something like respect. As it is, we don't. And we are forced to accept Rouge.

It is she who is more tolerant, because she will tolerate anything but intolerance in Bluenose, whereas Bluenose will tolerate tolerance nowhere. It is Rouge offers some recognizable happiness now. Bluenose offers something he calls happiness but which we don't recognize now as happiness. It is Rouge offers tobacco, Benedictine via the bootlegger, lying abed o' Sunday morning and whatever-we-please at night. It is she who offers the things we poor mortals believe are good because they have something in them of naturalness and freedom. And

so long as Bluenose remains on the side of his czars and dictators, Bluenose will be blue. And we are running to red, these days, as we have done, down the ages. How can we, being nothing more nor less than human, do otherwise?



CHARLATANS

THE greatest enemies of the art of writing in America, those who more than any hinder the development of a respectable literature this side of the Atlantic, are on the inside, members of the writing clan, those poseurs who, with almost admirable braggadocio, delude the American democracy into belief that they are artists and that the trade goods they produce is literature. There is of course a great healthy conspiracy among publishers to the same end. Among them the procedure is honorable; printers must live. Publishers have no connection with literature at all, per se. They generally,—with a few exceptions who make an art of publishing—will print anything. If a publisher says a book is a marvel we know very well what he means: he printed it and he would be very glad indeed to sell it.

But the deliberate charlatans of letters are not morally immune like a printer. The writer who is an artist, or who claims to be an artist, has a certain duty to advance the art. If he cannot satisfy himself with his own work, it is his duty to whoop for some one else's and encourage good work where he finds it. It is artistically illegal, it is

artistic treason to produce deliberately bad work except from motives of hunger or extreme distress. When he is driven in some extremity to degrade the profession, he is artistically bound to be ashamed of it. It is his duty either to explain or to keep silent. It is a violation of the code to pretend that consciously bad work is good work, serious work or sincere work.

The charlatans of letters produce work that, unless they are imbeciles, they know to be bad. They produce it, not as art, but as trade goods to supply a demand. They know it is trade goods. They intend it as trade goods. But they call it literature. They call it art. They pose as serious men of letters. They write articles on the literary profession; they lecture. They are damned sober about it, and elect officers.

The American democracy, which will believe anything that it hears often enough, believes them. It lacks the critical faculty anyhow, and is a ridiculously easy prey. It recognizes these poseurs, not as excellent yarn-spinners which they often are, but as bearers of the torch of culture, makers of American literature, "big writers." Its ideals of literature, not merely as recreation but also as art, are moulded by the charlatans. A lively story, though written in the style of a boiler-maker, is a masterpiece. A sentimental platitude is a thing of beauty.

As long as the organized and individual charlatans keep up their farce of declaiming that wretched trade goods is literature, just so long the American democracy is going to be unfit to welcome decent writing. What it firmly and reverently believes to be literature

while it is under the spell of the hocus-pocus of the charlatans is so different from the true art of letters that it simply doesn't know the latter when it sees it.

The charlatans who pose as the makers of American literature—and I am not saying anything about Nicholas Carter, whom I admire very much—have crippled that literature more than the American school system has. They have stabbed it in the back.



CATCH-WORDS OF THE SOPHISTICATED

It is precisely where meaning fails that a word comes in most opportunely. Disputes may be admirably carried on with words; words form a capital subject for belief..."—*Mephistopheles in "Faust."*

IMMEDIATELY I think the name "Huneker," I see two words—"nuance" and "evocation." Huneker would have robbed a widow for that pair, and he lugged them into his pages at every opportunity. Another engaging stylist, so-called, one Woodrow Wilson, cottoned to "process," "watchful waiting," and "world safe for democracy." Huneker, the writer, with his limited audience; Wilson, the politician—statesman, if you please, when he is quite dead—with his unlimited audience, loved, honored and obeyed a few words. So utterly unlike, these two men are labeled by the words they used. The trade-marks of their mentalities, their faiths, are a few, perhaps over-worked, but characteristically their own, words.

I am not interested, however, in either

Huneker or Wilson at this sitting. They were only by way of introduction. I am interested in an entirely different kind of person. He or she—but let me call them “they”, for they are increasing by leaps and bounds—they are to be found in Villages, or at 4 p.m. or 4 a.m. in tea-gardens with picturesque names like “The Green Beetle,” “The Black Parrot,” “The White Baboon.” They represent, some of them, a wealthy group with only one expressed interest and that in what they believe to be the expression of their own individualities. Other things bore them. Their tastes are a cultivated grotesque. They assume an habitual air of intellectual detachment. They are violent, nonetheless, in their praise of the unusual; they are violent in their disgust for the commonplace. They affect an easy familiarity and an indifference to the mysteries of concupiscence and the female torso. A woman’s navel? Their attitude suggests that navels had all been satisfactorily and permanently classified ages ago. Of much more significance is the manner in which the smoke from a perfumed cigaret curls from artfully drooping lips. They are content in what they delight to believe is sophistication and Continental—particularly French—decadence. They are the camp-followers of all the “neo-movements.” They give still-birth to innumerable magazines with strange names. Their garrulity

discloses and their cautious silence hides their own unsuspected, and unavoidably human, ignorance.

By their words ye shall know them, if you can’t interpret their eloquent silence. With what irritation do they use the words “sentimental” and “democracy.” How glibly comes the French phrase—and usually bad French. How familiar to them, how often used, are the words and only words, “Mallarmé,” “Remy de Gourmont,” “Aubrey Beardsley,” “Wilde,” “Moore,” “Huysmans,” “Ernest Dowson,” “Marinetti,” “batik,” “Bakst.” Once, the most unctiously tortured word was “intrigue,” but soon that one became too common—it got into the daily press—and now, the most exclusively popular among the discriminating is “gesture.” How revealingly do the trees gesture these days, and the houses, and movements, and the skies, eyes, cabbages and kings. And how myriad and varied the products of the “creative gesture.” By their words ye shall know them. By their latterly acquired “*flaneurs*,” “flairs,” “discriminatings,” “authentics” and “intelligent-sias,” they have built a faith. But I warn ye, sons and daughters of the screaming eagle, the faith of these pathetic frailties, these fashion-flirts, is as empty, as ephemeral, as—and I paraphrase my violent co-editor—their “tall empty catch-words” themselves. Will Brother Amos please pass the wickers?



SIR TOBY BELCH—Shall wee rowze the night-Owle in a Catch that will drawe three soules out of one Weaver? Shall we do that?

SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK—An’ you love me, let’s doo’t: I am a dogge at a Catch.—*Twelfth Night, Act ii, Sc. 8.*

Toy-Time

By LAFCADIO HEARN.

THIS is the season of toys—the happy time of trifles—a time which inspireth certain reflections, philosophical and otherwise, that may perhaps interest a portion of this great public.

Dear readers, how many are there of you who can now remember much of that period of existence when the Season of Toys was the happiest week in the long year?—the years, you know, seem so long when we are young, and so mercilessly brief as we move down the shadowy side of the hill of life. Probably not very many. All that memory has left to you is a faint sense of the vague, sweet happiness of those bright dead years—a memory at once delicately pleasing and sad like the perfume of flowers that have been buried alive in some secret drawer for a generation—a perfume that seems a reproach and makes the heart feel a little more full than usual. So is the memory of old Christmas weeks in years when the sun seemed brighter and the skies more clearly blue, and the meadows a deeper green, because the blood was warmer and the world seemed all new.

But of those mysterious toys which so strangely charmed the imagination of the child the fate has ever remained a mystery to the memory of the man. You cannot tell us whether the broken trunk of the wooden elephant which you tried vainly to repair with disappointed tears, was ever mended; or what became of the tin locomotive which you so ruthlessly tore apart in order to find out what made it “click-clack” inside, or the battalions of leaden soldiers, or the bronze cannon which shot off peas, or the wooden swords and other mockeries of war, or the building blocks which possessed secrets so hard to find out. Who knows what has become of them? What foolish little trifles they were, and yet what pleasure they gave, and what power even their recollection has upon you today! The ghost of a wooden elephant with a broken trunk may after all affect the regularity of the pulse for an instant. That broken trunk, ridiculous as it may seem, can still stir up memories which you dare not laugh at. You know you dare not laugh at them. What a beautiful time of life that was, and how golden the hours before we first learned that life is a struggle, and that passions are playthings for children of a larger growth—in short, before we had “become as gods, knowing both good and evil,” as Mephistopheles mockingly observes!

The Later Work of Herman Melville

By CARL VAN VECHTEN.

AMONG the great writers of England, those, perhaps, who most completely satisfy me are the restless fellows, who, enraged beyond solace by the customs and habits of their native island, shake the Albion soil from their boots and travel abroad on great ships. Once abroad, they are inclined to find as much fault with other countries as they had found in the past with their own and eventually, in a state of contented despair, they return to the motherland that rules the waves. Philip Thicknesse, Walter Savage Landor, James J. Morier, George Borrow, Richard Burton, Cunninghame Graham, and, perhaps, in a lesser degree, W. H. Hudson, all belong to this class and all of these men have written books which are oftener peeped into than most others on my garret shelves. The type is by no means rare in England; each generation, it will be observed, has produced one or more outstanding specimens. In America, on the other hand, it is almost non-existent. But one figure, as a matter of fact, can be brought forward as a claimant for the distinction. That figure, however, is sufficiently imposing to rank with the loftiest names in the English list. There can be no doubt that I refer to Herman Melville.

Recently many attempts have been made—and they have been to a surprising degree successful—to drag this author out of his semi-obscurity, to re-

furbish his tarnished reputation, and to set him back in a place of honor on our shelves. This attempt, carried through under mighty auspices, has not been half-hearted or niggardly, but almost without exception it has been made with reservations. The author of "Typee," "Omoo," and "Moby Dick" is assuredly a world genius, contemporary critics on both sides of the Atlantic inform us, but the author of "Pierre," "Mardi," and "The Confidence Man" is awarded as scant courtesy as he received in the forties and fifties. It is fairly apparent that Melville himself was beginning to foresee his fate when he wrote to Hawthorne, "What 'reputation' H. M. has is horrible. Think of it! To go down to posterity is bad enough anyway; but to go down as a 'man who lived among the cannibals'!" When he sent the letter, of which this is a celebrated excerpt, to the author of "The Marble Faun," he had written and published "Mardi," and from the reviews of this book, the first in which he had suggested more than was set down on the printed page, he was able to cast his melancholy horoscope. In another bitter passage in this identical letter, he refers to the compromise which he seemed to be forced to make, "What I feel most moved to write, that is banned,—it will not pay. Yet, altogether, write the other way, I cannot. So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches." As the particular botch he

was at work on then was "Moby Dick," I cannot quite see the pertinence of the argument used by those of the critical gentry who try to twist this remark into an excuse for the failure of Melville's subsequent output. Ban or no ban, he continued to write what he felt most moved to write.

His other early books (for it must not be forgotten that "Mardi" was his third published work, although for a reason, hereinafter to be stated, it falls into place quite naturally with the work of his second period), "Typee," "Omoo," "Redburn" and "White Jacket," his sea and island tales, were received with contemporary applause on both sides of the ocean. No other American has been awarded higher praise from London. These are lovely romances, replete with lively and languorous descriptions, sparkling with a sophisticated and cosmopolitan humor. There are, however, no metaphysical overtones, no "ontological heroics" in these books. All is pleasantly plain on the printed page. No shadows of meanings lurk in the bends of the sentences. In his preface to "Omoo," as a matter of fact, Melville refers to this very clarity. He seemed to be perfectly conscious of it; he was, I am convinced, the conscious artist in everything he touched. "In no respect," he writes in this revealing preface, "does the author make pretensions to philosophic research. In a familiar way, he has merely described what he has seen; and if reflections are occasionally indulged in, they are spontaneous, and such as would, very probably, suggest themselves to the most casual observer."

It is not to be wondered at that the naive readers of "Typee" and "Omoo,"

admittedly charming and delightful books, should have been perturbed, embarrassed, and a little angry when they read the two volumes of "Mardi," which are as bitter as wormwood, as subtle as a deep-sea pearl, and as imaginative as creative genius can be at its wildest. The American reviewers found themselves almost helpless before this performance but took refuge in the belief that the work showed the pernicious influence of a misunderstanding of the benignant philosophy of Emerson; the French dragged Rabelais into the discussion; while the English blamed Carlyle and Sir Thomas Browne. In his two following books, Melville, it appeared, had returned to his earlier pleasant, human ways, but, with "Moby Dick," he once more consorted with the stars. Again, excoriation was his lot. A coeval writer in *The Spectator* whines over "The Whale,"

Such a groundwork is hardly natural enough for a regular-built novel, though it might form a tale, if properly managed. But Mr. Melville's mysteries provoke wonder at the author rather than terror at the creation; the soliloquies and dialogues of Ahab, in which the author attempts delineating the wild imaginings of monomania, and exhibiting some profoundly speculative views of things in general, induce weariness or skipping; while the whole scheme mars the nautical continuity of the story.

"Moby Dick" was published in 1850. In 1851 "Pierre or The Ambiguities" followed, a book which with its morbid transcendental pessimism caused the reviewers to spill much more ugly ink. Doubtless "Pierre" seemed a mad piece of business in the fifties, but what would the fifties have made of "The Golden Bowl," or "Women in Love," or Mr. James Joyce's "Ulysses"? According to one writer at the

time of Melville's death, his withdrawal from literary life was brought about by the unfavorable manner in which "Pierre" had been received. Whatever the cause, he wrote no more novels after "The Confidence Man" in 1857, although he published a couple of volumes of verse, a department in which he was a vastly inferior performer.

Let us turn to some of the contemporary reviews of these books, "Mardi" and "Pierre." Here is a passage from a criticism of "Mardi" which appeared in the *Dublin University Magazine* for January, 1856: "We are once more introduced to the lovely and mysterious isles of the vast Pacific, and their half-civilized, or, in some cases, yet heathen and barbarous aborigines." As a matter of fact, we are introduced to nothing of the sort, as any intelligent reader may see for himself by reading five pages at random. But, to continue with such patience as we are able to muster,

The reader who takes up the book, and reads the first half of volume one, will be delighted and enthralled by the original and exceedingly powerful pictures of sea life, of a novel and exciting nature, but woeful will be his disappointment as he reads on. We hardly know how to characterize the rest of the book. It consists of the wildest, the most improbable, may, impossible series of adventures amongst the natives, which would be little better than insane ravings, were it not that we dimly feel conscious that the writer intended to introduce a species of biting, political satire, under grotesque and incredibly extravagant disguises. Moreover, the language is throughout gorgeously poetical, full of energy, replete with the most beautiful metaphors and crowded with the most brilliant fancies and majestic and melodiously sonorous sentences. But all the author's powers of diction, all his wealth of fancy, all his exuberance of imagination, all his pathos, vigor, and exquisite graces of style, cannot prevent the judicious reader from laying down the book with a weary sigh, and an inward pang of regret that so much rare and lofty talent has been wilfully wasted on a theme which not anybody can fully under-

stand, and which will inevitably repulse nine readers out of ten, by its total loss of human interest and sympathy. It is, in our estimation, one of the saddest, most melancholy, most deplorable, and humiliating perversions of genius of a high order in the English language.

With equal justice, these words might stand for a review of Anatole France's "L'Ile des Pingouins" or James Branch Cabell's "Figures of Earth," works which, in certain respects, "Mardi" resembles. I think I can safely promise, as a matter of fact, that anyone who enjoyed either of these books will enjoy "Mardi."

The contemporary reviews of "Pierre" are even more abusive. In *Putnam's Magazine* for 1853, Fitz-James O'Brien wrote,

It is no easy matter to pronounce which of Mr. Melville's books is the best. All of them (and he has published a goodly number, for so young an author) have had their own share of success, and their own peculiar merits, always saving and excepting "Pierre"—wild, inflated, repulsive that it is... In his latest work he transcended even the jargon of Paracelsus and his followers. The Rosetta stone gave up its secret, but we believe that to the end of time "Pierre" will remain an ambiguity... Thought staggers through each page like one poisoned. Language is drunken and reeling. Style is antipodal and marches on its head.

From 1860 on, with the exception of some little ineffective publicity which his death in 1891 allotted him, the name of Melville seems to have been almost forgotten, so nearly forgotten, indeed, that Barrett Wendell in "A Literary History of America" could write, "Herman Melville, with his books about the South Seas, which Robert Louis Stevenson is said to have declared the best ever written, and his novels of maritime adventures, began a career of literary promise, which never came to fruition."

This is all that he finds to say in a literary history of America about the greatest writer that America has yet produced. To show how very complete was the oblivion into which he had fallen, it is only necessary to mention the fact that when Viola Meynell's famous paper appeared in the *Dublin Review* in 1920, even "Moby Dick" was out of print!

The renaissance has begun, however. "Typee," "Omoo," "White Jacket," and "Redburn" are again awarded high praise. "Moby Dick," at last, has been moved up to the place of prominence at the very top of the list which it undoubtedly deserves, being, indeed, not only Melville's most significant achievement, but one of the most significant achievements in the record of modern letters. To the merits of the later novels, however, the new critics seem as blind as their forefathers. "Mardi," "Pierre," "Israel Potter," and "The Confidence Man" have been rejected as unanimously as they were in the fifties. This may be considered as particularly unfortunate because they have not been reprinted along with the others and unless a reader is lucky enough to meet with one of the early editions*—a matter of considerable difficulty at present when Melville is being assiduously "collected"—he cannot form his own judgment in the matter.

Viola Meynell seems to think that "Mardi" was written *after* "Moby Dick," for she says, "On its inventive side 'Moby Dick' is superior, at any rate to ordinary understanding, to the later books, 'Mardi' and 'Pierre or The Ambiguities,' and others. It will not sur-

prise readers of 'Moby Dick' to think that after it was written, its author passed from them in a sense." Carl Van Doren asserts that "'Pierre' is hopelessly frantic, the work of a mad Meredith raving over moral ambiguities," and he is satisfied to hit off "Mardi" as "one of the strangest, maddest books ever composed by an American."

In spite of all the detractors, I think it highly probable that the day may come when there will be those who will prefer the later Melville just as there are those who prefer the later James, those who will care more for the metaphysical, and at the same time more self-revealing works, than for the less subtle and more straightforward tales. The progression is somewhat irregular and has proved a stumbling block to earnest biographers and critics. The work of Melville cannot be divided into periods with the ease, say, that one divides the operas of Verdi. The satiric and philosophic "Mardi," for example, precedes in chronological order the simple sea-tales, "Redburn" and "White Jacket." The fact is that Melville was practising in "Typee" and "Omoo," assembling his background, so to speak. The milieu of these plain-spoken narratives furnishes the *décor* for "Mardi," ostensibly laid in the same environment. Now Melville wrote two *objective* stories of the sea, "Redburn" and "White Jacket," which, in turn, are followed by "Moby Dick," which utilizes the newly assembled scenery in a subjective way. After that, he never returned to purely objective writing, except, perhaps, in a short story or two. What follows, therefore, may be chiefly interesting to those who are interested in Melville, the man, but let no one, without reading

* They are all in the New York Public Library.

them, follow the fashion in consigning "Pierre," "The Confidence Man," and "Israel Potter" to limbo.

With the above explanation in mind, it will be easy to permit "Mardi," Melville's third published work, to slip into its place among the later novels. This book is a social-political-medical-economic-artistic-religious satire, more polite, and at the same time, more subtle than most satires, more allegorical in its framework, perhaps, than others. The irony is suave and mystic and the bitterness comes in the aftertaste. Out of the swill-barrel of contemporary abuse which was poured on this work, it is pleasant to dig out two reviews, the authors of which, in a sense, at least, comprehended the intention of the creator, that of Philarète Chasles, the Frenchman, and that of an anonymous writer in the *Democratic Review* (July, 1849). The latter critic says, in part,

"Typee" and "Omoo" were written for the multitude and consequently had no deep philosophy... The man who expects and asks for loaf sugar will not be satisfied with marble, though it be built into a palace... The fact that "Mardi" is an allegory that mirrors the world, has thus far escaped the critics, who do notices for the book table on a large scale. "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Gulliver's Travels" were written so long ago that they seem to have dropped through the meshes of the memory of the critics, and they have ceased to think any reproduction or improvement of that sort of thing possible in the future, because they have forgotten its existence in the past.

But even this sapient fellow ends on a moronic note. "Mr. Melville seems to lack the absolute faith that God had a purpose in creating the world," he adds. He also views with chagrin the fact that Mr. Melville is obviously disposed to smoke and drink.

Nevertheless, he must be given credit for his perspicuity in the dark ages.

"Mardi," as this reviewer reminds us, is no more obscure than "Gulliver's Travels," "L'île des Pingouins," "Erewhon," "Candide," "The New Republic," or "Alice in Wonderland," with all of which masterpieces it can claim a certain kinship and to most of which it can claim precedence. It is full of fine humor; it is sophisticated and gentlemanly. Its more obscure passages were written to befog the bourgeoisie and to delight the intelligentsia. The mystical philosopher, Babbalanji, remarks somewhere in the book, "Meditate as much as you will but say little aloud, unless in a merry and mythical way." Melville certainly said more aloud than any one else dared to say in America in 1847. The opening chapters, describing the life of the sailors adrift at sea, are the old Melville, open and above-board. They need no footnotes. In these chapters will be found as beautiful descriptions as can be found anywhere in this author's writing. I especially recommend the reader to peruse the chapter entitled, "The Sea on Fire," with its vivid picture of the sperm whales spouting phosphorescent water in the darkness, a strange pyrotechnical effect not frequently to be met with in nature. Presently, Melville rescues the lovely Yillah, who, like the Blue Bird, represents Happiness, from the clutches of the priests, who are attempting to conceal her, and descends on the mythical island of Mardi. Here he abides in perfect content with the ethereal Yillah, until she is again torn from his side by the clergy—Melville rather had it in for the ecclesiastics since they had challenged the accuracy of his derogatory references to the missionaries in

"Omoo". They had conveniently dubbed him a mariolatrist and had suggested to their congregations that a man with his record for island amours was not a fellow to be trusted in other respects.

In search of Yillah (Happiness) and pursued by Hautia (Passion), Melville, the philosopher; Babbalanji, the historian; Mohi, the poet; Yoomy and Media, the representative of the law, take a turn around the world. They visit England, France, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Spain and America, all disguised as outer islands. It is amusing to note that there was always an Irish question; the chapter on Ireland, indeed, might have been written today or tomorrow. "Isle, whose future is in its past. Hearthstone from which its children run," philosophizes Babbalanji. "I cannot read thy chronicles for blood," murmurs Mohi. And presently Babbalanji continues,

Verdanna's worst evils are her own, not of another's giving. Her own hand is her own undoer. She stabs herself with bigotry, superstition, divided councils, domestic feuds, ignorance, temerity; she wills, but does not; her East is one black storm-cloud, that never bursts; her utmost fight is a defiance; she showers reproaches, where she should rain down blows. She stands a mastiff baying at the moon.

It is also astounding to find an early American writer who had just as much fault to find with America as with the rest of the world.

The canoes drew near.

"Lo! what inscription is that?" cried Media, "there, chiseled over the arch?"

Studying those immense hieroglyphics a while, antiquarian Mohi still eyeing them, said slowly:

"In-this-re-publi-can-land-all-men-are-born-free-and-equal."

"False!" said Media.

"And how long stay they so?" said Babbalanji.

"But look lower, old man," cried Media, "methinks there's a small hieroglyphic or two hidden away in yonder angle. Interpret them, old man."

After much screwing of his eyes, for those characters were very minute, Champollion Mohi thus spoke—"Except-the-tribe-of-Hamo."

Here is a masterpiece of humor: "They were a fine young tribe, like strong new wine they worked violently in becoming clear. Time, perhaps, would make them all right." Thus is the boasting, tobacco-chewing, tooth-picking nation summed up. Later Babbalanji comments, "There's not so much freedom here as these freemen think. I laugh and admire." Media affixes an anonymous scroll to a palm-tree. Thus it begins:

Sovereign-kings of Vivenzal it is fit you should listen to wisdom. But well aware, that you give ear to little wisdom except your own; and that as freemen, you are free to hunt down him who dissents from your majesties; I deem it proper to address you anonymously.

Would that Eugene Debs and Jim Larkin, among others, had read this wise paragraph before they committed themselves! Later, the scroll continues,

For, mostly, monarchs are as gemmed bridles upon the world, checking the plunging of a steed from the Pampas. And republics are vast reservoirs, draining down all streams to one level; and so, breeding a fullness which cannot remain full, without overflowing.

Again, I quote from this priceless proclamation:

He who hated oppressors, is become an oppressor himself. . . It is not the prime end, and chief blessing, to be politically free. And freedom is only good as a means; is no end in itself! . . . Freedom is the name for a thing that is not freedom; this, a lesson never learned in an hour or an age. By some tribes it will never be learned. . . It is not, who rules the state, but who rules me. Better be secure under one king than exposed to violence under twenty million monarchs, though oneself be of the number.

Philarète Chasles was astonished to discover so *gascon* an American but he admired him. A cosmopolitan, a gentleman, a sly humorist, a great creative genius, what must his American contemporaries have thought of this man who ballyhooed for a drunkard's heaven, paraded his island amours, proclaimed that there was no such thing as truth, coupled "Russian serfs and Republican slaves," and intimated that a thief in jail is as honorable as General George Washington? Contemporary America doubtless thought the worst. It always does.

After Mr. Melville has well visited and criticized Europe and America, finding even Alma and Serenia (Christ and His Kingdom) uninhabitable, he betakes himself to the metaphysical mistland where he is most content to dwell. Yillah is lost forever. He discusses everything in life and throws the pepper of doubt into the reader's eyes. There are chapters on religion, on the dispensation of justice, chapters on war, which remind one a little of the battles between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, chapters on the gay world, on Italian art, on Spanish etiquette and French nobility. The doctors are trampled on; Spinoza, Hegel and Lombardi all read their heads. It is a magnificent and witty jumble of all the current philosophies. "Fancy Daphnis and Chloe dancing I know not what strange gavotte with Aristotle and Spinoza, escorted by Gargantua and Gargamelle!" exclaimed the critic of the *Revue de Deux Mondes*, after reading "Mardi." The language is extravagant, the thought still more so. Why not? one asks, and remembers that the early critics praised Shakespeare's character drawing and his

knowledge of the human heart, while they shook their heads deprecatingly over the extravagance of his diction. A wild and brilliant work of the imagination, such as "Mardi," demands more extravagant expression, certainly, than the solemn moments of Walter Pater. One of the best of the social satires "Mardi" probably means a little less and also a little more than is ordinarily believed. As Babbalanji remarks, "In many points the works of our great poet Vavona, now dead a thousand moons, still remain a mystery. Some called him a mystic, but wherein he seems obscure it is perhaps we that are in fault." Jean Cocteau rearranged this phrase in 1918: "*Lorsqu'une oeuvre semble en avance sur son époque, c'est simplement que son époque est en retard sur elle.*"

So much for "Mardi." For reasons already set down, I sweep lightly past "Redburn" and "White Jacket." As for "Moby Dick," so much has been written about this great book (perhaps not enough, but enough for the present) that it seems unnecessary to pause very long even here. I may say, however, that I have scant patience with those who consider "Moby Dick" only a sea story. One man, indeed, a well-known critic of literature, recently told me that he had not read the book because he did not care for tales of adventure! Equally pertinently, he might have said that he could not read "Hamlet" because he did not care for plays about Danes. "Moby Dick" is a tale of adventure in the sense that "Hamlet" is, in the sense that Dante's "Divine Comedy" is. It is the narrative of man's great struggle against the natural and supernatural and man's final defeat. It is surely

Melville's greatest book, surely the greatest book that has yet been written in America, surely one of the great books of the world. Just as surely it falls in with Melville's later work and yet the part it plays in the curious fabric I am weaving is so obvious that this mere suggestion is sufficient to give the reader his guiding signpost.

From now on Melville wrote inner rather than outer books and from now on he lost credit with public and critics both. His very next work, indeed, "Pierre or The Ambiguities," infuriated the reviewers and drove them to dreadful tongue-lashings. The ecclesiastics and the hundred per cent Americans helped to castigate the man. It may be said, in extenuation, that the performance was strange enough, even from the writer of "Mardi," to have wrung astonishment from stout hearts. Yet I cannot help believing that had "Pierre" been written today by James Joyce or D. H. Lawrence, its reception would have been far different. Either, with certain personal alterations, might have conceived the book. The subject, indeed, would have delighted the soul of Henry James, had he hit on it. In its consideration the subtitle must be stressed. Ambiguity is Melville's theme.

Pierre, a happy son, living with his widowed mother, betrothed to Lucy Tartan, whom, apparently, he dearly loves, learns, or thinks that he learns, that he has an illegitimate sister. On the instant (indeed, a little before, for his first strange meeting with Isabel is anonymous), he is seized with an embracing adoration for this new demikinswoman, an adoration which to the reader certainly appears to be sexual,

but which to Pierre himself is always ambiguous in its nature. His instinct at first demands a public recognition of the girl, a tardy restitution of her ambiguous rights, but more sober reflection convinces him that his mother will never receive this symbol of the bar sinister, of whose very existence she is quite unaware. Further, it is necessary to consider his dead father's good name, quite unbefouled so far as public scandal goes. In his ambiguous dilemma this hero hits on the expedient of a white marriage. During the ceremony, "the surplice-like napkin dropped from the clergyman's bosom, showing a minute but exquisitely cut cameo brooch, representing the allegorical union of the serpent and dove." Now Pierre bids his Lucy farewell and is turned from his home by his proud mother whom he never sees again. Dying within a few months, she disowns him by testament, leaving her property to his cousin, Glen Stanly, also in love with Lucy. Pierre and Isabel go to New York, where he tries to make his living as a novelist. In the meantime, Lucy, through some mystic visitation, has arrived at the belief that Pierre has acted quixotically but nobly (she is entirely unaware of his reasons), and insists on coming to live with the possibly incestuous pair. Glen and her brother attempt to drag her away but fail. So does her mother. Unlike, she occupies an adjoining chamber to the guilty (?) couple. The ensuing chapters are blood-curdling in their implications. There are passages which seem to suggest that this amazing marriage was truly consummated. There are passages which seem to suggest that Lucy... but let the author speak:

As a statue, planted on a revolving pedestal, shows now this limb, now that; now front, now back, now side; continually changing, too, its general profile; so does the pivoted, statued soul of man, when turned by the hand of Truth. Lies only never vary; look for no invariableness in Pierre. *Nor does any canting showman here stand by to announce his phases as he revolves. Catch his phases as your insight may.*

The plot hastens towards its catastrophe, in which Pierre's novel is rejected as Voltairean and atheistic, and in which he is insulted by Glen, whom he kills in a street brawl. Led to prison, he is visited by Lucy and Isabel. The sister-wife drinks poison and Pierre and Lucy drain the bottle. The three ambiguous corpses clutter the stage as the curtain swiftly falls. Towards the close, there is a curious scene in which the very evidence that Pierre had urged to make himself believe that Isabel was his sister is discovered to be worse than circumstantial. The book, indeed, is a study of a man who commits an ignoble act by convincing himself that he is committing a noble one. It depicts the danger of idealization. Pierre is so difficult to come by at present (only the first edition exists and that was very largely depleted by a fire at the Harpers' in the early fifties) that it is by no means as well-known or as much admired as it would be if it could be reprinted. Whoever republishes it should send advance copies to Drs. Freud and Brill, and to Mr. D. H. Lawrence. They will be entranced. I prophesy that a new cartload of Freudian literature will grow up around this book, the peripeteia of which occurs in a dream.

Both in "Pierre" and in "Moby Dick" critics have protested against the author's use of Gothic dialogue. That this was a perfectly conscious device on

Melville's part, I think there can be no question, for when he wished, as in "Bartleby", he could be as convincingly colloquial as the next man. This Gothic dialogue serves to remove "Captain Ahab" and "Pierre" from any particular environment or period. It gives them a strange air of nowhere, no place, very apposite to his general purpose in the creation of these masterpieces.

"Pierre" appeared in 1851. Three years elapsed before "Israel Potter" was published, three years, at the beginning of which Melville had been execrated and cursed, in the end forgotten. "Israel Potter" is Melville's satiric dart at Fame, a lady at whom he had already aimed many derogatory epithets. I have already quoted the passage from his letter to Hawthorne. In another letter he declares, "Though I wrote the gospel in this century, I should die in the gutter." In "Mardi," doubtless furious at those who thought of him only as an ethnologist among cannibals, he has Babbalanji say,

"Not seldom to be famous, is to be widely known for what you are not, says Alla-Malolla. Whence it comes, as old Bardianna has it, that for years a man may move unnoticed among his fellows; but all at once, by some chance attitude foreign to his habit, become a trumpet-full for fools; though, in himself, the same as ever. Nor has he shown himself yet; for the entire merit of a man can never be made known; nor the sum of his demerits, if he have them. We are only known by our names; as letters sealed up, we but read each other's superscriptions."

From "Pierre" I have culled the following:

In the inferior instances of an immediate literary success, in very young writers, it will be almost invariably observable, that for that instant success they are chiefly indebted to some rich and peculiar experience in life, embodied in a book, which because, for that

cause, containing original matter, the author himself, forsooth, is to be considered original.

This may be regarded, in a sense, as a rather bitter criticism of his own "Typee." "Many, many souls are in me," Melville cries in "Mardi," and E. L. Grant-Watson has tried to prove that each character in "Moby Dick" represents a different phase of this fascinating and many-sided figure.

Ostensibly a historical novel, "Israel Potter" really then is the forlorn record of a man who has given everything and who gets nothing. The last chapter, relating to Israel's melancholy return to America after his forty years' exile, of which Raymond M. Weaver writes, "The unnecessary degradation of the hero with which the book closes is utterly inexasable both in art and probability," may be more readily understood if it be regarded as a symbol for Melville's return to the field of literature, searching vainly for his fame. While Potter, in the Revolutionary War, braves every danger and suffers every privation, Dr. Franklin, Ethan Allen and Paul Jones reap the rewards. Thus might Melville have summed up his own career, which Barrett Wendell, in carefully chosen words, informs us, "never came to fruition." A bitter book, with a bitter dedication to the Bunker Hill monument. I cannot understand why it is passed by so slightly by all the commentators, none of whom throws it more than a contemptuous line, for aside from its autobiographical interest, it boasts passages of great charm, and there is a sea fight described in Melville's best manner. Personally, however, it is Dr. Franklin, the eccentric American minister to France, who most fascinates me

in this book. This old gentleman, preaching prohibition and economy, warning Israel to beware of the wiles of the lascivious and Fragonardesque chambermaid, and removing bottles of cologne from the young fellow's bedroom, is a very diverting figure. Between this book and "Moby Dick" there can be, of course, but one possible choice, but had I to choose between this book and "Typee," I would cry with enthusiasm, "Give me 'Israel Potter'!"

A year later a volume of fugitive pieces appeared, "The Piazza Tales," the title of which and the prologue may have been suggested by "The Tanglewood Tales," just as I have sometimes thought it quite possible that "Pierre" was Melville's emotional reaction to "The Scarlet Letter." Of these, the first two, "Bartleby," with its recurrent and memorable refrain, "I prefer not to," and "Benito Cereno," a sea tale which should be better than it is, are worth reading. The "Bell Tower" is a fairly good horror story in the manner of Poe and the rest are rather essays than stories. There is more uncollected material of this nature.

We get an interesting picture of our subject at this period from Hawthorne. In 1856 Melville, on his way to Constantinople, turned up at Liverpool, where Hawthorne was then living and the author of "Our Old Home" noted in his diary,

He looked much the same as he used to do; a little paler, perhaps, and a little sadder, and with his characteristic gravity and reserve of manner. I felt rather awkward at first, for this is the first time I have met him since my ineffectual attempt to get him a consular appointment from General Pierce. However, I failed only from real lack of power to serve

him; so there was no reason to be ashamed, and we soon found ourselves on pretty much the former terms of sociability and confidence. Melville has not been well, of late; he has been affected with neuralgic complaints, and no doubt has suffered from too constant literary occupation, pursued without much success latterly; and his writings, for a long time past, have indicated a morbid state of mind. So he left his place in Pittsfield, and has come to the Old World. He informed me that he has "pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated;" but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation, and I think will never rest until he gets hold of some definite belief. It is strange how he persists—and has persisted ever since I knew him and probably long before—in wandering to and fro over these deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sandhills amidst which we were sitting. He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other. If he were a religious man, he would be one of the most truly religious and reverential; he is a very high and noble nature, and better worth immortality than most of us.

Readers of "Mardi" will remark that this search for "some definite belief" began very early. The characters of this satire search for religious consolation as avidly as they search for happiness.

Let us remember Melville's struggle for faith and the apparent collapse of his career as we approach "The Confidence Man," his last work in prose, save, perhaps, some fugitive magazine pieces and a privately printed book or two. It is not a novel, nor is it, as Frank Mather Jewett ingenuously suggests, a series of "middle-western sketches." Melville simply carried Brook Farm to the deck of a Mississippi steamboat as in "Mardi" he had carried Europe to the South Seas. Emerson is the confidence man, Emerson who preached being good, not doing good, behaviour rather than service. Why no one has heretofore recognized Melville's purpose

in writing this book is a fact I cannot profess to understand. Perhaps some one has, but I can find no record of the discovery. Probably dozens of critics have been influenced by the misleading comments of their forebears into not reading the book at all. At any rate, here Melville has his revenge on those who accused him earlier in his career of transcendental leanings. This is the great transcendental satire. The work assumes the form of a series of dialogues, somewhat after the manner of W. H. Mallock's "The New Republic," ironic dialogues between the representatives of theory and practice, transcendentalism and reality, with the devil's advocate winning the victory. Emerson's fatuous essay on Friendship is required preparatory reading for this book. "If a drunkard in a sober fit is the dullest of mortals, an enthusiast in a reason-fit is not the most lively," is a good summing up of Ralph Waldo's "lofty and enthralling circus." Hawthorne may have been secretly pleased with this book, if he understood it, because Emerson confessedly had never been able to finish a book by the good Nathaniel. A recent commentator, H. M. Tomlinson, is content to say of it, in an otherwise glowing account of the genius of its creator, "The Confidence Man' is almost unreadable." I wonder if he cannot read the book with eager interest now that I have thrown this light upon it?

This was the end. The "Battle Pieces" followed, and after an Asiatic tour, the fabulous "Clarel," but these are in verse, and wherever else I can follow Herman Melville, I find I cannot follow his excursions into poetry. He settled down

to twenty-eight years of silence and seclusion in New York, erecting a monument to himself in refusing to become a charter-member of the Authors' Club and otherwise comporting himself with dignity and circumspection. Like George Borrow, and for a similar reason, he was forgotten. Most people did not know how good his work had been;

those who did no longer remembered it, and he made no effort to awaken dead enthusiasm. Readers who are satisfied to stop with "Moby Dick" will not understand his later life, but those who go on through "Israel Potter" and "The Confidence Man" will get a clearer picture of his bitterness and unhappy striving.



Wild Geese Over the Desert

By GLENN WARD DRESBACH.

From sunset, slowly fading
To misted beryl and blue
Streaked with the melted topaz,
The goose-wedge comes in view.

The boughs of twisted cedars
On ledges darkly sway,
Making a futile gesture
To rise and fly away.

Nothing will have beginning
And nothing end in me,
For watching the geese fly over,
That any one may see.

Only my heart makes gesture
Of lifting wings to go,
Like boughs of the twisted cedars
Dark on a fading glow.

The Cajans

By ALICE GORTON WYNN.

A LONG, hoarse bellow from the rice mills announced the close of the laboring day. Two women, sitting on the porch of a bungalow, watched the flow of humanity as it sluiced out of the mill doors and coursed down the street. With a little shiver, Janet Lovell moved her rocker nearer to Mrs. St. Martin.

"My husband says they are harmless, but look at those men! They are like the pictures I have seen of cut-throats and thugs and pirates—and they pass so silently."

Mrs. St. Martin's laugh was carried out on the breeze, but not a man turned his head. They filed by, black-browed, hard-visaged, sleeves rolled above great copper-colored arms, faces as emotionless as pall bearers.

Mrs. St. Martin spoke in perfect English, but with a pleasing French accent.

"I forgot you were a stranger in Louisiana," she said. "They are Cajans, dear. They do look scary, but not one of them would hurt a fly—that is, unless they thought that one of their number was being wronged. It is their lack of ambition and ignorance of the laws of hygiene which make the older ones look like ogres. You needn't have the least fear of the men, but the women are often a nuisance—there are the Louvierres now—"

"Just what is a Cajan?" Janet interrupted.

"The word 'Cajan' is a corruption of

Acadian. Cajans are direct descendants of the French peasants who were banished from Acadie, now Nova Scotia, during the old colonial wars. They wandered down to the prairies of southwest Louisiana. Longfellow wrote about them, you remember. There are many thousands of them. The majority cannot read, nor have they ever been fifty miles from home. They are as simple as children. Those men will pull off their shoes the minute they get home and sit barefoot on their front porches."

"But you are French, Mrs. St. Martin," puzzled Janet.

"Yes, I'm a Creole, a different class from the Cajan. We represent the gentility of old France. Creoles are the pure blooded posterity of early French and Spanish settlers. The Creoles are proud; Cajans work as servants. Creoles are gay; the Cajan has no mirth. We mingle with other people; they continue almost untouched by the tide of events that swirls about them."

Mrs. St. Martin pointed to the end of the little street where it was stopped by Bayou Plaquemine that loitered, silt-laden, across a level stretch of prairie until it disappeared in a distant cypress swamp. On the other side of the bayou, rude homes could be seen dotting the jagged green fans of the dwarf palmetto.

"That's where the mill-hands live," she said. "We call it Cajanville."

A man with a long, lean body straggled behind the crowd in the street, his gaunt yellow face hunched into his shoulders.

"There goes Jean Louvierre, the most shiftless Cajan in De Bellevue," Mrs. St. Martin said, rising to take leave. "He and his family are the town sponges. By moving when the rent is due, they manage never to pay the landlord. I am told that, after they have victimized all the gullible people in one town, they travel on to another a few miles away."

Next morning, after breakfast, Janet Lovell was trying some new records on her victrola when a shadow darkened the window. Looking up, she saw the black eyes of a young girl shining from the depths of a pink sunbonnet. A smile flitted across the girl's face.

"I pass by—I hear talkin' machine—I come een. I like 'em, me. I crazy 'bout."

"What is your name?" Janet asked.

"Clarisse Louvierre—I live two mile 'cross Bayou Plaquemine." Clarisse laid her hand on the mahogany box. "She nice. Good to dance. Bring plenty company. Ma'm Taylor, she have talkin' machine to sell second hand. Nobody have one 'cross the bayou."

"Why don't you ask your father to buy Mrs. Taylor's if she wishes to sell it?" Janet asked.

Clarisse stood gracefully on one toe and the heel of the other foot, pulling on the ties of the pink bonnet, her long black braid over one shoulder.

"*Mon pere*, he say too much money it cost—twenty dollar—but *ma mere*, she say she get it for me in time."

So long as Janet dispensed the music, Clarisse stayed. She gazed in wonder at Janet's stylish morning dress and smooth coils of hair.

"I comb hair like Madame, only I got no hairpin."

Janet laughed, walked to her toilet-table and handed Clarisse a paper of hairpins. "You may have these. Your hair is so curly, it should roll beautifully. I am going to read the paper now, Clarisse. Come to hear the music another day. I hope you will get a talking machine for yourself."

"Oui, Madame, a thousand thank. *Adieu*." Her arms folded in front, Clarisse walked reluctantly down the street.

Clarisse did not visit the next day, but her mother did. Janet had never seen, even in the cosmopolitan French market of New Orleans, anyone quite like Mrs. Louvierre. Witch-like hair encircled her wooden face and crawled about her neck and temples. Nervous fingers picked at her skirt.

"That Clarisse, she say you nice," Mrs. Louvierre announced.

Janet laughed. "I am glad she liked me. Clarisse is a pretty girl, and looks like a clever one."

"Oui, Clarisse, she smart. I not read, me. Clarisse, she read nice. Read in Second Reader at the school. She pretty, Clarisse; but she not get married. She have not the company—no beau."

"Married!" Janet almost screamed. "Clarisse is a little girl."

"Non, non, Madame, non. Clarisse fifteen years. Me, I marry fourteen."

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Janet. "How old was Mr. Louvierre?"

"He was eighteen the week before."

Mon mari, he not work today. He got sick. He have three grain of the fever."

"Is he in bed?"

Mrs. Louvierre hugged herself with nervous arms. "*Oui*. He that sick."

"Have you had the doctor?"

"*Non*. The doctor he come, he do nothing. He make the foolish mark on little paper. It do no good."

"Probably I shall go riding past your house this afternoon," Janet said. "I'll stop in and see how he is."

"*Merci*, Madame. I live 'cross the bayou under the catalpa tree. *Adieu*."

Mrs. Louvierre hurried away, her gaunt body moving in nervous jerks.

That afternoon, John Lovell sat in their car waiting for his wife. She came out a trifle worried.

"Dear me! My new pink muslin dress is gone. The one with the white organ-die sash! I can't find it anywhere."

"It will come out of hiding, dear, when you want to wear something else," he teased.

"Of course I'll find it, but I can't think how it came to be misplaced. Let's drive by the Louvierre home on the other side of the bayou."

They found an ash-colored, two-roomed cabin. A broken-down picket fence was supplemented in one place by a large cast-off piece of sheet-iron; in another by a growth of yucca spikes. Clarisse rose from an inverted box-seat on the porch when she spied the car approaching across the open prairie.

The automobile stopped at the gate, and, through the low windows, the occupants could see the sick man lying in bed.

"I'll stay only a minute," Janet promised, as she left the car with a glass jar in her hands.

Clarisse and her mother met Janet at the door.

"Give Mr. Louvierre this hot soup," Janet said. "It will do him good."

"*Merci*, Madame," answered the older woman. "A thousand thank for Madame's goodness."

"How is the sick man?" the visitor asked.

Mrs. Louvierre solemnly shook her head. "Ah! He yet have the fever, Madame. I get the herb doctor. She bind the head and the neck in the leaf of the dogwood."

"Bound in leaves this hot day! Gracious!" Janet exclaimed. "If the fever continues, you must get a regular doctor from town, and have his prescription filled. I will see that it is paid for. Let me hear in the morning." Janet smiled, especially at Clarisse. As she went down the steps, she heard remarks in French.

"*Madame est une ange*," Mrs. Louvierre said.

"*La bonne dame*," Clarisse agreed.

John Lovell backed the car out into the road, and sent it speeding over the level country. For two miles the drive lay between rice fields, whose full yellow sheaves swayed continuously in the breeze from the distant Mexican Gulf. Then the road meandered through a little cove where ancient cypresses shook their long moss-beards.

Janet forgot the Louvierres until next morning. She was crocheting near a window when she saw a figure in flimsy black voile moving slowly up the front walk. Still watching her stitches, she rose and walked to the door.

"Good morning, Mrs. Louvierre."

Mrs. Louvierre took a square of black

cloth from her pocket and wept within its folds.

"*Mon mari*, he dead," she wailed. Her face was distorted with grief.

Janet laid down her work and conducted the visitor to her own rocking chair. "I am very sorry for you. I had no idea his illness was so serious."

The woman was a tableau of dejection. "He gone. I got no money for the funeral. It take the money. Oh!" she sobbed.

"Don't cry. That will be arranged," comforted Janet. "Here is a dollar, and, I am sure in a case like this, others will help make up the necessary amount."

Mrs. Louvierre quickly wiped her eyes. "You say that in a letter, lady. I take it 'round."

"About how much will you need?" questioned Janet, going to her desk.

"I think it twenty dollar, 'bout."

Janet wrote a carefully worded note asking the readers to contribute toward the funeral expenses of the deceased Jean Louvierre. "What will you do now?" she asked in sincere sympathy.

"Me'n Clarisse, we move to *mon frere*. He live to Jumonville. I take *mon pauvre vieux* to bury in Jumonville. The wagon it move tomorrow before the light. It far to Jumonville."

Mrs. Louvierre had stopped crying, but her face was drawn and her hair disheveled. She tucked the note in her bosom and hurried down the walk. Halfway to the gate, she stopped.

"I come back, I scrub the floor, I wash the window, Madame," she promised. "You that good."

After the noonday meal, Janet again motored out to the Louvierres. For pro-

tection, she took her negro maid, who carried the remains of a roast and an apple pie.

There was no one in sight at the house, so Janet went in carrying some white roses, followed by the maid with the eatables. The dead man was lying on a table under a time-yellowed mosquito netting, a white cloth bound around his head. Clarisse was sitting near the bier, her face in her hands. Mrs. Louvierre was busy in the kitchen, but came in upon the arrival of visitors. She smiled at the sight of the viands.

"May the blessed Virgin hear you pray," she whispered.

The room was small and close, so Janet stayed only a few minutes. She arranged the roses in a cheap vase which she had brought, patted Clarisse, and shook hands with Mrs. Louvierre.

"Did you get the money you needed?"

"Oui, Madame. The people they ver' kind. Madame I never forget."

About dusk of the same day, Mrs. St. Martin's roadster drew up at the Lovell's front gate. Janet jumped up from the depths of a porch swing. "Come in," she invited. "I'm dreadfully lonesome. John is out of town."

"My liege lord has taken himself to his lodge," returned Mrs. St. Martin. "That's why I'm out. Come, get in; it's a grand night for a ride. We'll motor across the bayou and take in Cajanville."

As the car passed each Cajan home, children swarmed to the roadside and looked with a timid wild-animal gaze at the passing automobile. Like magic, without noise, the parents stood behind their offspring.

"Look!" cried Janet, "I see a bright

light in the Louvierre home. Poor things! I feel very sorry for the old woman. Her distress was terrible. Even if they are town parasites, they are human beings."

At the Louvierre's gate, a wagon was piled with household goods.

"Mrs. Louvierre told me they would start before daylight for Jumonville," said Janet. "Listen! What's that?"

The grating sound of a cheap graphonola, played with worn-out points, reached their ears. Moving shadows and shuffling of feet suggested guests assembled.

"Rather gay sounds for the home of a grief-stricken widow," observed Mrs.

St. Martin. "When did they buy the graphonola, I want to know? They didn't have it yesterday."

She stopped the car in the shadow of the catalpa, and they looked through the window. Clarisse, in Janet's stolen pink muslin dress with the organdie sash, and white roses in the black coils of her hair, was dancing with a brown, supple young Cajan in a snuff-colored suit.

Mrs. Louvierre sat on a bed, her wooden face cracked across with a broad smile—and leaning against the door-jamb was the corpse, the white cloth still bound around his head, eating a huge piece of Janet's apple pie.



Song

By ARTHUR SYMONS.

Silver bangles on the wrists,
Chains like hanging fruit,
From her head, a pale bough,
Nodding to her naked foot;

Eyes half asleep,
Earrings like the while mood;
And the silken dawn had clothed the body
With webs from her loom.

Gipsy, gipsy,
The moon is on the wane;
Why did you steal the moon for your earrings
And my heart to hang on your chain?

Affairs of Catherine

No. 2. LONG LIVE THE EMPRESS!*

(A PLAY IN ONE ACT.)

By LOUIS GILMORE.

CHARACTERS:

GREGORI ORLOF
PRINCESS DASHKOF
THE EMPRESS CATHERINE
ALEXIS ORLOF
COUNT PANIN
A SENTRY

An apartment in the Winter Palace adjoining the Empress' dressing-room. The door on the right leads to the dressing-room; the door on the left, to a corridor. In the center of the room, a writing-table. Between the door to the dressing-room and the table, a sofa.

The period is the 18th of July, 1762.

At the rise of the curtain, Gregori Orlof, a Hercules with the head of an Apollo, wearing an elaborate uniform, is stretched at full length on the sofa, his head and shoulders propped on pillows. He opens a large packet of official-looking papers to which are attached great seals, and is negligently glancing through them when Princess Dashkof comes in from the corridor. Dressed in the uniform of the Horse Guards, Princess Dashkof looks like a boy. She is nineteen.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(Stopping short in astonishment.)

You here! Where is the Empress?

GREGORI ORLOF

(Continuing to glance through the papers.)

In her dressing-room. Not to be disturbed.

* Apply to the Author, care The Double Dealer, for permission to act.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

Indeed, Gregori Gregorievitch, you are very much at home here! May I ask what you are doing?

GREGORI ORLOF

(Nonchalantly.)

Certainly, Princess. Looking through some papers.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

So I see. And if I am not mistaken —papers of State! I have seen the Imperial seal too often at my uncle the Vice-Chancellor's not to recognize it. No one has the right to touch them except the Empress and those whom she especially appoints!

GREGORI ORLOF

Exactly. She has told me to open them.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

You? Impossible!

GREGORI ORLOF

Do you doubt my word?

PRINCESS DASHKOF

Most emphatically!

GREGORI ORLOF

You take advantage of the fact that you are a woman, Princess. If you were a man, you should answer to me for this...

PRINCESS DASHKOF

I am enough of a man to stand by what I have said!

GREGORI ORLOF

(Arrogantly.)

You forget what the Empress owes me and my brothers!

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(Contemptuously.)

You and your brothers! You speak as if the Messieurs Orlof had brought about everything of themselves. I, too, had a share in the glorious revolution which has made Ekaterina Feodorovna autocrat!

GREGORI ORLOF

No doubt.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

It was I who informed her Majesty that the Czar intended to repudiate her, shut her up in a convent, declare the Grand Duke Paul illegitimate, and marry my wretched sister. I have sacrificed my family to my friend!

GREGORI ORLOF

People will say that the Princess Dashkof disliked the thought of seeing her sister one day her sovereign. The Princess Dashkof is very proud.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

Posterity will judge otherwise of my motives. What I have done, I have done for the sake of her Imperial Majesty, and for the good of Russia.

GREGORI ORLOF

(Drily.)

Well, it is fortunate for all of us that the Czar has let himself be dethroned as a child is sent to bed. *(Indicating a chair.)* Be seated, Princess.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(Haughtily.)

Gregori Gregorievitch, I have not waited for an invitation from you to sit—I have waited for you to stand!

GREGORI ORLOF

(Resuming his inspection of papers.)

You will excuse me, Princess... Affairs of State!

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(Angrily.)

You not only open papers of State, but you play the host in her Imperial Majesty's anteroom!

GREGORI ORLOF

As for the papers—I wish I didn't have to go through them. It's a damn bore! Playing the host to Princess Dashkof is a diversion.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

Sir, you are presumptuous! I trust I shall not have to endure your insolence long!

(The Empress Catherine II comes in suddenly from the dressing-room. She is thirty-nine, magnificently dressed, and not as slender as she was when Poniatowski saw her at Oranienbaum.)

CATHERINE

Ach, Dashkof—I thought I heard your voice! *(With a shrewd glance from one to the other.)* What, my two best friends quarreling?

PRINCESS DASHKOF

Look, your Majesty! This Orlof has the presumption to loll on a sofa even in the presence of his sovereign!

CATHERINE

(With an amused smile, evenly.)

My friend, you must excuse him as I do. The good for nothing fellow has a sore leg.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(Incredulously.)

A sore leg, your Majesty?

CATHERINE

(Sitting on a chair by the side of the sofa.) Yes. Bring up a chair, Dashkof. He has had a fall from his horse. It's the right leg that is hurt—a very ugly bruise, I assure you.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(Her face betrays increasing astonishment and disapproval.)

Am I to infer that your Majesty has seen it?

CATHERINE

Seen what? The bruise? I bandaged that with my own hand.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

It seems to me that your Majesty has shown an excess of kindness.

CATHERINE

(Sharply.)

How so? What is the matter with you? Your face! Are you sick?

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(Biting her lips.)

Why? Am I pale?

CATHERINE

No. Red.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

It is only loss of sleep for fifteen nights...

CATHERINE

(Touched.)

Ach, yes. I know you have not spared yourself in my service. As soon as the imperial crown is a trifle firmer on my head, I trust I shall know how to reward all of you as you deserve.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

I have asked no other reward of your Majesty than a colonelcy in the Preobazinsky Guards.

CATHERINE

(With an ironical smile.)

My Egeria, the Academy would suit you better than a military corps. I will enlarge the Academy of Arts and Sciences and appoint you president.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(Without enthusiasm.)

As your Majesty pleases.

CATHERINE

(Turning to Gregori Orlof.)

Why don't you say something? You haven't opened your mouth since I came into the room!

GREGORI ORLOF

(Gruffly.)

What chance has a man to open his mouth when two women get together!

CATHERINE

(Indulgently.)

Will you believe it, Dashkof? The lazy fellow wishes to give up military service. You must join me in remonstrating with him.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(Drily.)

Your Majesty, as sovereign, has so many means of rewarding him beside promoting him in the army—there is no need to do violence to his wishes.

CATHERINE

True. Will you get my snuff-box? It's on the writing-table.

(Princess Dashkof bows and goes to the writing-table.)

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(Returning with the snuff-box.)

Here it is, your Majesty.

CATHERINE

(Taking it.)

Thanks. *(Takes a pinch of snuff.)* And now, what were we discussing?

GREGORI ORLOF

You and Dashkof were discussing my leg.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

I was doing nothing of the kind!

CATHERINE

(Good-humoredly.)

Don't mind him, my dear. The fellow has a fine leg and is naturally proud of it. *(To Gregori Orlof, familiarly.)*

No. We were dissuading you from giving up a military career—with your leg, there is no reason why you shouldn't become General.

GREGORI ORLOF

General? Field-Marshal! (*They both laugh.*)

PRINCESS DASHKOF

Madam, with your permission, I shall return home to dress.

CATHERINE

You won't have time. It's nearly six o'clock.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

But, your Majesty, I cannot appear at court in this costume!

CATHERINE

We are nearly the same height. Wear one of my own.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(*Half in jest.*)

Your Majesty is the taller. You are Catherine the Great; I, Catherine the Little! Posterity!...

CATHERINE

(*Interrupting.*)

Posterity! My dear Ekaterina Romanovna, if you and Prince Dashkof continue to live apart, you won't have any—unless you do as I do.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

In what way, your Majesty?

CATHERINE

Take a lover!

PRINCESS DASHKOF

I trust your Majesty does not doubt my devotion to my husband.

CATHERINE

No. But then Prince Dashkof is charming. Suppose you had had a husband like mine! Shall I tell you a story of Peter III when he was Grand Duke?

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(*Resuming her seat.*)

Do, your Majesty.

CATHERINE

(*Takes a pinch of snuff.*)

We were staying at Oranienbaum at the time... One day, going of a sudden into his Imperial Highness' room, I beheld a great rat—hanging and surrounded by all the pomp of a military execution! I asked the Grand Duke what all this meant. He told me that the rat had committed a crime; one which, according to martial law, was deserving of capital punishment; it had climbed over the ramparts of a fortress of cardboard which he had on a table, and had eaten two sentinels, made of pith. The criminal had been tried by martial law, sentenced and hanged—and was to remain there exposed to the public gaze for three days, as an example!

PRINCESS DASHKOF

In justification of the rat, it may at least be said that he was hung without having been questioned or heard in his own defense. Is the deposed Emperor still at Ropscha, your Majesty?

CATHERINE

Yes. He had an attack of colic three days ago. I presume he is better, as I have had no report from Alexis Gregorievitch since.

GREGORI ORLOF

My brother Alexis writes that the house at Ropscha is very retired but very pleasant; and that the deposed Emperor goes to bed drunk every night.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

Then he has everything he wants except his liberty!

CATHERINE

He has asked me for nothing but his mistress, his dog, his valet de chambre and his violin. I have sent him the last three! I have not sent him his Madame de Pompadour, for fear of scandal and not wishing to increase the general excitement.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

I blush for my unhappy sister! (*Kneeling.*) Madam, forgive my unfortunate family. You know I have sacrificed them to you.

CATHERINE

The Countess Betsy—I have sent to your father's estate near Moscow. You may tell your father and the Vice-Chancellor they may appear at court.

PRINCESS DASHKOF

(*Rising.*)

A thousand thanks. With your Majesty's gracious permission, I will go dress.

CATHERINE

Do. Ask Chkourine for whatever you need.

(*Princess Dashkof bows and retires into the dressing-room.*)

CATHERINE

My great bear, there is something I must tell you...

GREGORI ORLOF

Well?

CATHERINE

I received a letter this morning from Count Poniatowsky.

GREGORI ORLOF

(*Sitting up with a bound.*)

That fellow! Your lover!

CATHERINE

(*Restraining him.*)

My former lover! Remember you have a sore leg.

GREGORI ORLOF

(*Rising and pacing the floor.*)

Damn my leg! What does the fellow want?

CATHERINE

Me. He wants to come to Petersburg to see me.

GREGORI ORLOF

(*Fiercely.*)

Tell him that if he comes to Petersburg, I, Gregori Orlof, will kill him!

CATHERINE

But I have already told him...

GREGORI ORLOF

What?

CATHERINE

(*Rising and going toward him.*)

Not to come!

GREGORI ORLOF

(*Taking her in his arms.*)

Darling little angel mother!

CATHERINE

(*Indulgently.*)

What a great jealous bear it is!

GREGORI ORLOF

(*Gruffly.*)

I could eat you up!

CATHERINE

Do you love me so much?

GREGORI ORLOF

Yes. It's a lucky thing for the pretty fellow, he isn't coming to see you...

CATHERINE

You would have torn him to pieces?

GREGORI ORLOF

Yes.

CATHERINE

But, I shouldn't have liked that...

GREGORI ORLOF

(*With a jealous growl.*)

You still love him?

CATHERINE

Yes. I shall always love him. Just as I shall always love you, Gregori...

GREGORI ORLOF

(Reassured.)

Then, you do love me a little?

CATHERINE

Love you! I adore you!

GREGORI ORLOF

(Complacently.)

Do you love me more than anyone else in the world?

CATHERINE

Can you doubt it?

GREGORI ORLOF

No.

CATHERINE

(Simply.)

Have I not borne you a son?

GREGORI ORLOF

(Covering her face with kisses.)

My own angel! If anything should happen to the deposed Emperor, will you marry me?

CATHERINE

(Starting.)

Marry you! Why, what should happen to the deposed Emperor?

GREGORI ORLOF

(Evasively.)

Nothing. I said—if—

CATHERINE

(Withdrawing from his embrace.)

Listen to me, Gregori Gregorievitch. If anything should happen to the deposed Emperor while in the custody of your brother Alexis, I will hold your brother Alexis responsible. Do you understand? *(Sits on sofa.)*

GREGORI ORLOF

Yes. But he has already had an attack of colic...

CATHERINE

What of it?

GREGORI ORLOF

Men have died of the colic.

CATHERINE

Peter III has not!

GREGORI ORLOF

(Significantly.)

What if he should have a turn for the worse?

CATHERINE

(Rising.)

What do you mean?...

GREGORI ORLOF

As long as the Czar lives, your Majesty's throne—none of our lives is safe! After all, your Majesty is only a German princess and a usurper, whereas Peter III is of the blood of Peter the Great!

CATHERINE

(Angrily.)

I—a usurper! Do you realize to whom you are speaking—that I am the Empress?

GREGORI ORLOF

Yes. But an Empress I and my brothers could dethrone in a month!

CATHERINE

(Quietly.)

That may be, but I could have you hung in a week!

GREGORI ORLOF

If the Czar live, he may do for all of us. He is the anointed sovereign and the people...

CATHERINE

(Impatiently.)

The people! Bah! In Russia there are no people! Who should know better than you! Is it the people who have made me Empress?

GREGORI ORLOF

(Proudly.)

The Orlofs!

CATHERINE

Then, it is to the Orlofs I look for support! What the people want is a sovereign! Has not Peter III, with his own hand, signed his abdication and admitted his incapacity to govern?

GREGORI ORLOF

But whatever faction would oppose your Majesty will rally around the anointed sovereign—were he an idiot!

CATHERINE

Would they rally any the less around his corpse? Listen to me, Gregori Gregorievitch. I am sending Peter III to the fortress of Schlusseburg, as soon as decent and comfortable apartments can be got ready and relays of horses placed on the road... He will be as safe there as in the tomb!

GREGORI ORLOF

But, your Majesty, we have heard nothing from Ropscha for the last three days. What if the Czar should already have had a turn for the worse!

CATHERINE

You mean that Alexis Gregorievitch may have already?...

GREGORI ORLOF

Through an excess of zeal for your Majesty's safety.

CATHERINE

You are not sure?

GREGORI ORLOF

No.

CATHERINE

I shall write him a letter. (*Goes to writing-desk, writes letter and is about to seal it—but instead proffers it to Gregori Orlof.*) You wish to read it?

GREGORI ORLOF

(*Taking the letter.*) Yes. (*He reads it, frowning.*)

CATHERINE

(*When he has finished.*)

Seal it. And give it to a courier.

GREGORI ORLOF

(*Sealing it.*)

I myself will take it.

CATHERINE

How far is it to Ropscha?

GREGORI ORLOF

About twenty versts.

CATHERINE

Twenty versts. That would take—to go and come, with a stop of a few hours—an entire day and night, would it not?

GREGORI ORLOF

At least.

CATHERINE

To have you away from me for an entire day would be bad enough; but for an entire day and an entire night—Give it to a courier!

GREGORI ORLOF

As you please. (*He walks toward the door, opens it and stops short—as though he had seen an apparition.*) Alexis!...

(*Alexis Orlof walks past him into the room. Disheveled and spattered with mud, he is, like his brother, a giant in stature and build, and in uniform, but ugly and with a great scar across his face.*)

ALEXIS ORLOF

(*Goes immediately to the Empress, drops on one knee and kisses her hand.*)

Long live the Empress!

CATHERINE

(*Withdrawing her hand, imperiously.*)

Get up! What is the meaning of this?

ALEXIS ORLOF

The Emperor is dead, your Majesty!

CATHERINE

Dead!

ALEXIS ORLOF

He died this morning from a stroke of apoplexy. I have ridden post-haste from Ropscha to be the first to inform your Majesty of the fact.

CATHERINE

Had he a physician attending him?

ALEXIS ORLOF

Yes, your Majesty. It was the physician who pronounced it a stroke of apoplexy.

CATHERINE

I shall have the body opened and examined by my own physician.

ALEXIS ORLOF

(Surprised.)

Why, your Majesty?

CATHERINE

I fear the officers in charge may have poisoned him, so much was he hated.

ALEXIS ORLOF

(Boldly.)

Madam, do you accuse me?

CATHERINE

It is not I who accuse you. *(To Gregori Orlof, who, meanwhile, has shut the door to the corridor and come forward.)* Give him my letter.

ALEXIS ORLOF

(Takes the letter, breaks its seal, and reads it without a change of expression.)

Well, now that it is too late, what does your Majesty intend to do?

CATHERINE

I must see Count Panin.

ALEXIS ORLOF

(Opening the door and shouting to the sentry on duty in the corridor.)

Sergeant.

THE SENTRY

(A Cossack sergeant appears in the doorway.) Yes, your Highness?

ALEXIS ORLOF

Count Panin—to the Empress!

THE SENTRY

(Saluting.)

Yes, your Highness. *(Goes.)*

ALEXIS ORLOF

Does your Majesty intend to arrest me?

CATHERINE

Can you deny that you are guilty of the Emperor's death?

ALEXIS ORLOF

No, your Majesty. Three days ago I put poison in his brandy. He vomited it. Finally, to make an end of him, I had to strangle him with my own hands.

CATHERINE

You! Alone?

ALEXIS ORLOF

A child could have done it...

CATHERINE

I mean, there was no witness?

ALEXIS ORLOF

Does your Majesty take me for a fool?

CATHERINE

(Quietly.)

Alexis Gregorievitch, you are an extraordinary man! If the moon were to fall from the sky, you would say to me: "The moon has fallen, your Majesty," in the same tone in which you would tell me that your cow has had a calf. Do you expect to go unpunished?

ALEXIS ORLOF

That is for your Majesty to decide!

(Count Panin comes in from the corridor. He has hurried and is a little out of breath. A man of about fifty, he may still be reckoned handsome. He detests the Orlofs, but is too timid openly to oppose them.)

COUNT PANIN

(*Bowing to the Empress and approaching to kiss her hand.*)

Your Majesty has sent for me?

CATHERINE

Yes. (*Takes a pinch of snuff.*) I had designed to send Peter III to the fortress of Schlusseberg, but it has pleased God to dispose otherwise. The deposed Emperor died this morning from a stroke of apoplexy.

COUNT PANIN

Madam, this is indeed grave!

CATHERINE

I realize the gravity of the situation we are placed in. That is why I have sent for you. I desire that the body be opened and a report made—if only that the finger of suspicion may not point at me.

GREGORI ORLOF

Who would dare?

CATHERINE

History—perhaps.

ALEXIS ORLOF

Well, we needn't worry about that!

COUNT PANIN

The news of the Emperor's death is in no sense public?

ALEXIS ORLOF

No. I have attended to that.

COUNT PANIN

Good. It should be withheld for at least twenty-four hours. Precautionary measures must be taken, your Majesty; and we must have time in which to prepare a memorandum to the senate and a proclamation to the people announcing the Emperor's death in the most careful terms.

CATHERINE

Shall I appear before the court as usual?

COUNT PANIN

If your Majesty will appear as usual, I most strongly advise it. The Emperor's death can be announced to your Majesty tomorrow—while at dinner—when your Imperial Majesty dines in presence of the foreign ambassadors and the entire Court. Your Majesty has a genius for appearances!

CATHERINE

I beg you to count on me. What o'clock is it?

COUNT PANIN

(*Consulting a watch.*)

It lacks a few minutes of six.

CATHERINE

I must ask all of you to withdraw, with the exception of Gregori Gregorievitch, who has a sore leg. (*Extending her hand to Count Panin.*) Return to me as soon as the Court is assembled. And as soon as I shall have dismissed the Court, we shall all of us meet here to decide further what must be done.

(*Count Panin, having kissed her hand, bows, and goes out followed by Alexis Orlof.*)

CATHERINE

(*At the door to the dressing-room.*)

I shan't be long. I have only to put on the imperial regalia. (*Exit.*)

ALEXIS ORLOF

(*Who has gone no further than the door, returning.*)

Gregori...

GREGORI ORLOF

(*Going toward him.*)

Alexis.

ALEXIS ORLOF

She should be grateful to me for having rid her of the Czar—now she can marry you...

GREGORI ORLOF

I am not sure that she will...

ALEXIS ORLOF

Not sure? She loves you—doesn't she?

GREGORI ORLOF

Enough to share the imperial bed; but perhaps not enough to share the imperial crown.

ALEXIS ORLOF

She shall share the crown, too.

GREGORI ORLOF

Leave me. I must speak to her alone.

(Alexis Orlof goes; Gregori walks the floor, frowning.)

(Enter Catherine, in full imperial regalia.)

CATHERINE

How do I look?

GREGORI ORLOF

Beautiful.

CATHERINE

Is that all?

GREGORI ORLOF

Magnificent! Now that the Emperor is dead—marry me!

CATHERINE

But I don't want you for a husband; I want you for a lover.

GREGORI ORLOF

Your Majesty already has what she desires.

CATHERINE

I desire nothing more. Why should you?

GREGORI ORLOF

I want to be sure of you.

CATHERINE

Do you doubt me?

GREGORI ORLOF

No. But then your Majesty is a woman—and a woman who has had more than one lover...

CATHERINE

(Lightly.)

Would you deny me a woman's privilege of changing her lovers? *(Then, seriously.)* I am conferring on you the title of Prince, with a salary of a hundred thousand roubles.

GREGORI ORLOF

Thanks.

CATHERINE

The apartments immediately below my own—I am having fitted up for your use. There is a private staircase connecting the two.

GREGORI ORLOF

Let me kiss you for that...

CATHERINE

(As he takes her in his arms.)

And as a mark of my especial favor, I am having my miniature set in diamonds for you to wear in your button-hole.

(Count Panin comes in from the corridor.)

COUNT PANIN

(Embarrassed.)

A thousand pardons... Permit me to withdraw... I fear I have arrived at an inopportune moment...

CATHERINE

(Quickly.)

No. Stay. You have arrived at the most opportune moment in the world. Gregori Gregorievitch is asking me to marry him... What am I to say?

COUNT PANIN

(Regaining his self-possession.)

Have I your Majesty's permission to be perfectly frank?

CATHERINE

If it is not asking too much of a statesman.

COUNT PANIN

If your Majesty require it, I can perform the impossible!

CATHERINE

I beg of you...

COUNT PANIN

The Empress can do as she pleases; but Madame Orlof can never be Empress of Russia!

CATHERINE

Thanks. (*To Gregori Orlof.*) You have heard Count Panin?

GREGORI ORLOF

(*Surlily.*) Yes.

CATHERINE

You have my answer. Ask anything else of me you like. The Empress of Russia can afford to be generous—Madame Orloff could not...

GREGORI ORLOF

(*Hesitates, then takes her in his arms.*)

My own Empress! My Queen!

CURTAIN



The Challenge

By MARY BRENT WHITESIDE.

These times are the ancient times, when the world is ancient, and not those which we account ancient by an inverted reckoning.—*Bacon.*

Now are the ancient times! The world is old,
 And old are we, who have the messages
 Of burning Ilium; of Socrates
 From his dark cup. Can we be young, who hold
 In living hands, the tale Assyria told,
 And, master of illimitable seas,
 The key to yet sublimer destinies?
 Our youth passed by with Sargon's squandered gold!

We are the ancient world! It is for us,
 Who saw the ruin of Sardanapulus,
 And then the proud Hellenic glory pass,
 The challenge of the ages: "False and true,
 "Ye have our blood bought message; yet alas,
 "What would we learn, should we come back—from you?"

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

By ARTHUR SYMONS.

IN "My Diaries," in the year 1913, I find these lines: "I am alone just now here, and in this dark world I am overwhelmed with woe—I realize how little I have accomplished, how little I have affected the thought of my generation in spite, as I am still convinced, of the soundness of my view of things, and of some skill and courage in expounding it." This is the saying of one who writes under a cloud: have the storm clouds yet lifted their threatening heads before him? There is always the Demon of the Abyss to contend with.

On November 4, 1892, is this note: "'Esther' is out. I have sent copies to Gladstone, Morley, George Meredith, William Watson, and Knowles." On the 22nd: "A trouble to me is the apparent failure of 'Esther.' It is not reviewed. Only from Meredith has a letter of high approval come." "It is not reviewed," he complains. I give here, verbatim, before I consider the question of his prose, the unsigned review I wrote in that year, which has never been reprinted.

Blunt's "Sonnets of Proteus" seemed to promise the advent of a new poet. They were dedicated to Lord Lytton, and they did what Lytton had tried to do, what he had failed in doing. They were modern and personal; they were written from the point of view of a man of the world—using that epithet in its best signification. Here were no traditional Phyllises, not lyric Mauds even; these Manons and Juliets were very

real people—real in their presentiment certainly, and probably real in the commoner sense of the word. Here formed in no very regular sonnet-forms, were women of today, just the women whom we know, "in their habits as they lived,"—the very bonnets, *fichus*, of the period. The sentiment was everywhere modern, of to-day—the sentiment of a man who has lived and loved, not sparingly, not ignobly. Often imperfect, wantonly imperfect, in form, these sonnets recalled the not always formally perfect stanzas of Meredith's "Modern Love." That magnificent poem was an absolutely new departure; and from "Modern Love" dates much of the strongest verse written in England since its time. Some of James Thomson's, some of Henley's, the best of Blunt's—this is not all, but it is sufficient enough. All deal modernly with what is essentially modern love—love in its actual surroundings, in London, in Paris, with all that complexity of self analysis, of curious consideration, with which we are so fatally dowered, at the end of this reflective irresolute century. Blunt follows Meredith, with singular closeness, in a style which, in "Modern Love," was as definite an invective as the manner of treatment. It may be defined as a *staccato* effect, in place of the customary *adagio*; as in effect also, in those simple lines, each a single sentence, of something more closely allied to our daily speech than the usual poetic phraseology. Just this

style, just this manner, I find again in "Esther," the poem in fifty-three Shakespearean sonnets which opens this book.

"Esther" is named "a young man's tragedy"; and "a true story of the earth," it tells a tale, ever old and new, of the fall of man.

The passionate heart of youth with its desires
Is not all noble and some baseness clings
For ever mixed with its eternal fires
Else were it single among human things.
And all life's wisdom learns but this last plan,
To jest at tears and weep man's mirth and man.

The motive indicated is worked out in a very realistic narrative of an adventurer at Lyons. There is a fair in the Place d'Armes and a youth, but newly come from a solitary life among the Alps, finds his way among the crowds thronging the jugglers' and dancers' booths.

I went among them all with grave intent,
I, too, to find it may be, some delight.
I was a boy and knew not what life meant,
Nor what the pleasures were men seek in it.
Only I knew that, mingling with that throng,
I was a stranger a strange world among.

In one of the booths he meets a little woman—

A childish face, but wise with woman's wit,
And something, too, pathetic in its gaze—

a woman who, as he discovers later, is the great actress who is thrilling the town every night in "Manon." She is charmed with the fresh, ignorant boy; he, half-fearing, suffers himself to be charmed too.

We stayed at Lyons three days—only three,
In Esther's world of wonder and renown.
She, glorious star, each night immortally
Playing her Manons to the listening town.
I glorious too, but in Love's firmament,
Watching her face, by which alone I moved,
A shadow near her, raptured and intent,
And seeking still the signs that I was loved.

Thrice happy days! Thrice blessed tragedy!
Her *des frieux* was I, her lover lorn,
Bound to her fortune, blest to live or die,
And faithful even though to faith forsworn,
Waiting behind the scenes in that stage-land
To greet her exits and to squeeze her hand.

It ended, as such things must end, and the youth—grown man—and looking back on this youthful episode, can but regret that he wronged by anger a woman who was indeed a Manon Lescaut—"faite pour les pardons et non pour les serments," as Armand Silvestre has defined once for all, the exquisite, faithless creature. "Dear passionate Esther, soulless but how kind!" is his epitaph on the grave of love.

This is the story of Esther, and the story is full of meaning—full, too, of opportunities. It is told effectively, sympathetically, with a certain warmth and vividness that is lacking in certain of the present verse-writers. Yet, after all, it seems to me that Blunt has scarcely done justice to it or to himself. This is not the first appearance of Manon on the stage of his poetry. I have met her in the "Love Sonnets of Proteus," and from them I know her better than she can be known by those who see her first as Esther. Compare the section named after her in the "Love Sonnets" (the story but hinted at, the personality so cunningly evoked) with this elaborate telling of her story. There is a great difference, and the difference is in just the most essential part of poetry. "Esther" is narrative, it is realism; it tells the facts of the case precisely as they might be told in prose, with reflections, poetical in their way, that might also have found their place in a prose telling. Now to do this and to write really satisfactory poetry seems to me impossible. In the "Love Son-

nets" there is no narrative; the little, charming, prosaic facts that creep in from time to time are but delightful accidents; what we have is the essential poetry of the emotions, of faintly indicated situations, in which the emotions had crystalized. In "Modern Love" there is a narrative; but it is told "in tragic hints," no more. The situation is flashed upon you as by the flash of lightning—then darkness, and then again a flash. The poem stands alone in the literature of its time; moving by "tragic hints" to the cadence of an irony that achieves quite a new expression in verse, it gives voice, in that acid, stinging, bitter-sweet style made out of the very moods of these modern lovers, to all that is new, troubled, unexpressed, in the convolutions of passion, all that is strange, novel and unexpected, in the accidents of passionate situation, among our sophisticated lovers of to-day. The poem laughs while it cries, with a double-mindedness more constant than that of Heine. Of German humour, Meredith said: "Their laughter is unfrequent, and rather monotonous—never a laugh of men and women in concert. It comes of unrefined abstract fancy, grotesque or grim or gross, like the peculiar humours of their little earth-men. Spiritual laughter they have not yet attained to; sentimentalism waylays them in the flight." In his review of Robert Lytton's "Poems," 1867, he says: "Heinrich Heine added a new element to his songs and ballads: an irritant exile breathed irony into them, and shaped them into a general form and significance. He is the unique example of a man who made himself his constant theme, and he pursued it up to the time when he was rescued from his

'mattress grave.' By virtue of a cunning art he caused it to be interesting while he lived." Swinburne, in his letter in reply to a review of "Modern Love" in *The Spectator* said: "Praise or blame should be thoughtful, serious, careful, when applied to a work of such subtle strength, such depth of delicate power, such passionate and various beauty, as the leading poem of Meredith's volume: in some points, as it seems to me (and in this opinion I know I have weightier judgments than my own to back me) a poem above the aim and beyond the reach of any but its author." The "weightier judgment" he refers to means that of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

To return to Blunt, in "Esther," it is the poetry that is the accident, not the prosaic facts. It is an accident that often happens, for there are admirable passages in the poem. But the immense difficulty of telling a modern story in verse is not overcome. It is a courageous, a most interesting attempt, but it stops short of success. The "Love-Lyrics" (not always lyrics, and not often essentially lyrical), are far less interesting than his work in sonnet form and in stanzaic blank verse which he has a curious way of writing as other people write rhymed verse, sometimes very effectively as in these lines:

This morning, as I passed
Over the burn, there was an instant's hush
Among the trees, and then a whispering
Which woke the birds; and of a sudden, lo!
A thousand voices breathed conspiracy;
And now a silence. There are listening ears
Among the bushes waiting till I speak.

The poems that attempt to dance in metre, dance in fetters; the writer is at his best in iambics, and it is at his peril that he ventures upon another measure.

All his verse is bound to the visible shapes of reality, even when he seems to choose and arrange them with the most lawless freedom. Only, in comparison with the lines I have quoted where he refers to "bushes" take this version of mine of the last six lines of a sonnet of d'Annunzio, and you will see the difference between what is verse and what is poetry.

But if Jacin with a hoarse cry appear,
The scattered herd rises and runs thereto,
Looking on him with trouble fixedness.

Even so I love to image for you, dear,
My swift desires that rise and run to you
Like horses pastured upon rosebushes.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt is, like Lord Lytton was, a man of the world, a traveller, in certain senses a diplomatist, a man of many capacities, of many adventures, a diligent student of life, with infinite opportunities and the keenest desire to profit by his adventures, spiritual and unspiritual, and by the "furrowing lessons in life" he understands so profoundly. His appreciation of the human comedy is immense; his own part in it is constant, considerable, and to himself always an excitement. "Indefatigable curiosity" here is the summing up of his adventurous spirit; for he is one of the survivors of Catholic families, knights errant; and seems to have been as much of a wanderer when he visited the Bedouin tribe of the African desert as when he lived in Spain. He is among the Aristocrats—who are the salt of the earth—and who hate Democracy.

"My Diaries," that begin in 1888, have in them a vivid and a virile quality that sets them beside certain famous Confessions. Indeed, it seems to me, there are in many of these pages an ab-

solute sense of the primary emotions, almost a complete mastery over one of the primal emotions, just because it has attained complete mastery over the writer's soul: the emotion of Faith. Exasperated as he must become under the stress of adverse circumstances, he has none of the absorbing, the protesting self-consciousness that drove Rousseau, in spite of himself, to set about explaining himself to other people, to the world in general. He has none of Celini's violent turbulence, who was shocked to think of going down into his grave without having made the whole world hear these voices—these trumpeting voices of his supreme satisfaction. Only, there might be something of Casanova in him; who, always passionate after sensations, and for their own sake simply, set himself to the writing of an autobiography that remains one of the most amazing that we have on record.

One of the most revealing sentences in the "Diaries" is this, on William Morris. "One thing, only, I think, he did not know, much as he had written about it, the love of women, and that he never cared to discuss." Morris was passionate only in his impersonality; in deep passion he was as lacking as he was in profound thought. To him art was a peculiar, absorbing, quite serious kind of play, in which the stanzas of a poem, an acanthus on a wall paper, a square of stitches in tapestry, a paragraph of prose, were all of precisely equal importance, and, in a way, equal lack of importance. "Morris," wrote Swinburne, "has an English respect for temperance and reserve, good things as drags, but not as clogs. He is not afraid to tackle a passion, but he will not move an inch from his way to tackle it."

Wilfrid Blunt gives me a sudden sense of more than "the tragic hints" in a man's existence in the story of his last meeting with Oscar Wilde in January, 1894, at a famous luncheon in Upper Grosvenor Street.

Of all present he was without comparison, the most brilliant, and in a perverse mood he chose to cross swords with one after the other of them, overpowering each in turn with his wit, and making special fun of Asquith, who only a few months later, as Home Secretary, was prosecuting him on the notorious charge which sent him to hard labor in prison.

In 1896, referring to the appointment of Alfred Austin to the post of Poet Laureate, he says—as all of us who love Poetry were aware—that the choice was a ridiculous one; then,

Morris refused, the Queen objected to Swinburne, Patmore was a Catholic; anyhow Austin is better than Lewis Morris, than Watson, Dobson, Davidson and the rest of the sons of their own penny trumpets.

It is amusing to find Yeats in 1898 trying to experiment magically on Wilfrid Blunt, on which this comment is made:

The performance was very imperfect, not to say dull.

Opening by chance pages 66-67 I read with surprise:

15th July, 1892. To see Cardinal Manning. Taking with me a basket of roses for his birthday, of which I was reminded by Hedgecock's remark in the morning that today was "Swithums." He told me of two new poets, Symons and Mrs. King.

Who the latter was I have not the faintest notion, but the fact is, that the Cardinal, having read my "Days and Nights" (1889) did me the honor of sending for me. I admit that I was rather intimidated by what he said of my verses; much less so, when he tried to persuade me to become a Catholic. "The discovery of new values in life is a very chaotic experience," writes Joseph Conrad in his last Confession; "there is a tremendous amount of jostling and confusion and a momentary feeling of darkness." That is exactly what I felt, after I had left the Cardinal's presence.



Vestments

By EDWARD SAPIR.

The blue sky is a carapace
For the green-glint field;
Wrapped in the glory of your face
Is a soul seven-sealed.

O heart of me, O painted door
To another heart of me,
Life is a glittering screen for
Another mystery.

The Insular Roman

By ALFRED KREYMBORG.

MOST of the streets of present day Rome are narrow. So are most of the people. The sidewalks are hardly wider than cow-paths. It is impossible for more than two people to walk abreast. Accordingly, this develops cramped habits in the business of pedestrianism. If you are coming towards two Romans (especially if you are unfortunate enough to be a woman), they pretend not to see you. They are always engaged in conversation, or rather, in monologues, to which the other man does not listen, being too busy with his own. There is nothing for you but to step off into the gutter to let them pass—especially if you are a woman, against whom they have an insinuating way of brushing. You frequently risk your life by manoeuvring into the gutter. There is a constant current both ways of trams, motors, carriages, trucks and bicycles. And the gutter is only wide enough for vehicles to pass two abreast. The Roman doesn't give a continental whoop about anything but Rome, and in Rome he doesn't give a solitary darn about anything beyond himself. The Roman is as insular as any proud denizen of Omaha, Nebraska.

One can readily trace this physiology of the Roman streets into the psychology of the Roman mind. The Roman mind wouldn't exchange a dish of its favorite, fattening ravioli (and I don't blame him for loving it) or a single

drop of Frascati, for a whole knapsack of modern paintings, sculptures, plays, poems. The old art is good enough. Look at St. Peters. Isn't it magnifico? Have you been to the Vatican—beheld Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel? Isn't it the most sublime creation in the entire history of the whole universe? Yes, you say, nothing like it—nothing ever was, ever will be like it. But what are you doing nowadays? What do you mean by nowadays? Have you been to the Coliseum, the Catacombs, the Forum, the Pincio? Yes, yes—but what are you doing nowadays? What should we do—what is there worth doing that we haven't done before—have you seen the dungeon in which Saints Peter and Paul were incarcerated—the remains of the Caesars—Trajan's Forum—our obelisks, our fountains, our piazzas? Yes, yes, yes—but I'm not a tourist. I want to know what you are doing now. Not that this matters, perhaps. But living in the present—and coming from a little land where we have to live in the present, because we have no past to refer to or boast about—the habit is stronger than I—I want to see what you are doing now. Rome was once a present building a future which is now a past—very good. You hate your tourists, deride them, spit on them. I don't blame you. They have made housing conditions in Rome impossible. You, a native, cannot even rent a rathole. But

couldn't you get rid of some of these tourists—far be it from me to suggest, by destroying your relics—but by starting something new? But what is there new we haven't already started? How about futurism? Futurism!!! My interlocutor gave vent to a torrent of abuse and indicated a small vaudeville house, the Salon Margherita, with a large display sign announcing a performance by Marinetti and his latest breed of wild animals. Marinetti? Good Lord! Let's go in there. And in we went.

Never have I beheld such a jam of people, nor heard such a riot of noise. Every available inch of standing and sitting room as well as hanging room, and even places not available, supported some wildly gesticulating Roman. It soon became evident that people for the most part had not come to see and hear the show, but to see and hear themselves. As a matter of fact, the show itself, which ran along in the order of a vaudeville performance or cabaret, had little opportunity of being seen or heard because of the vociferous interruptions on the part of the audience, interruptions in many cases accompanied by playful missiles, which succeeded in driving the performers off the stage and bringing down the curtain, long before the termination of an act was in order. The acts themselves were quite awful, it is true, but any hope they might have had of improving as they progressed received an untimely thrust. Marinetti himself, a pleasant enough, gentlemanly individual, would doubtless have demonstrated a little more of the magnetism with which he is credited if he had not been forced to spend the better part of the evening wiping the remains of to-

matoes and eggs and other reducible products from his collar, full dress shirt front, and other parts of his evening regalia. No amount of hostility—and the antagonism reached the frenzy of pandemonium at times—seemed to ruffle Marinetti's seraphic cheerfulness. He is, of course, an old master in this matter of dodging vegetables intended for other purposes than those of the dinner table. One even had a suspicion, abetted by a whisper from a neighboring Italian, that some of the antagonism had been hired in advance to act as a *claque* toward the encouragement of just such a demonstration from the audience. Romans claim that there is no better business man than Marinetti and that he learned his methods in the commercial capital of Italy, where he sojourns: Milan. But this might be another way of saying that one Italian city hates another Italian city with the gusto of pre-national times. Business or no business, art or no art, the performance that took place or tried to take place got over practically nothing to a stranger to these doings. While a certain act, for example, was in progress, the backs of the audience were turned to the stage because of the greater attraction exercised by a man in the balcony who had decided that this was the proper moment for a vociferous harangue; or some other man in the rear of the orchestra, vying with the man upstairs, lifted his lungs in raucous melody which others developed into a monstrous choral. The whole evening was a Fourth of July celebration made up of rapid-fire incidents of this character. Impartial judgment about Marinetti and his colleagues must go over

to another time. In conclusion, it may amuse you to learn that Marinetti and his colleagues once retaliated on an audience in Naples by quietly turning on to the spectators the mouths of sundry serpentine pipes, commonly known as hoses. The auditorium was cleared of antagonists within a few minutes.



Trees in Paris: 1890

By ARTHUR SYMONS.

The pining leaves that only know the light
Of Paris gas by night,
The leaves that hunger for the harvest moon
And sunny birds that croon
Among the branches rocking in the breeze—
The piteous boulevard trees,
How can they drink the day or night across
Such memories of loss?
All day they dream of sunlight such as yields
Its rapture to the fields;
Of streams that curl about the roots now grown
Half brother to the stone;
And all the night they long for the cool gleams
The moonlight lays on streams.
All that they see, instead of flocks and herds,
And happy flights of birds,
Is the long dull mechanic flow of feet
Through lengths of jostling street;
The wheels that turn behind the patient horse
Upon his weary course;
And all the human faces dull and base,
Face after tedious face.

This is the fate of trees that know the light
Of Paris gas by night.

Apogee

By HERMANN B. DEUTSCH.

MOST of Dalilah Robbin's waking hours and all of her dreams were tintured by a nameless longing for something she had sought—vainly—all her long life to define. Please understand this correctly. Dalilah was not dissatisfied with her lot. Had the shaping and ordering of her life been left wholly to her, she would have chosen and ordered precisely what the three hooded ladies who wield distaff, thread and relentless shears had doled out to her.

Had the fashioning of her destiny been left altogether to herself, Dalilah would have chosen a fat and fertile red loam farm in a north Louisiana parish; she would have chosen to bear six apple-cheeked children and would have chosen to have them grow up into sturdy young men and women now seriously devoted to apple-cheeked youngsters of their own; she would have chosen a neat wooden home, painted an economically weather-and-beauty-proof brown; she would have chosen a bark-thatched shed near the house wherein to store the household supply of firewood and the galvanized washtubs and the charcoal firepots and other kindred oddments.

She would have chosen a piano-built reed organ for the front parlor; she would have chosen undressed cowhide seats—hairy side up—for the chairs on the front gallery; she would have chosen to set house, shed, reed organ, cowhide-seated chairs and all into a triangular area, bare of grass or other vegetation,

at the junction of three rural "main-traveled" high roads—a house facing one road and flanked by the two others, with a huge, hairy pecan tree standing sentinel at the point of confluence.

She would have chosen to populate the bare yard about the house with pudgy brown hens, of nondescript ancestry, it is true, but utterly intent upon the serious business of laying eggs, with periodic incursions into the field of manifold maternity. To this proletariat she would have added an aristocracy of pigs; no uncertain ancestry here, but pure bred stock distinguished for the rapidity with which it multiplied and waxed fat.

She would have chosen Dave Robbin for a husband; she would have chosen to purchase at regular intervals, a new flivver, the periodicity of these purchases determined by Dave's complete lack of comprehension of the theory of propulsion by internal combustion engines plus the abrasive power of carbon and grit when applied to rapidly moving metallic surfaces.

She would have chosen, at the time of this writing, to be fifty-and-odd years old; to wear shapeless gray calico garments on most occasions; to possess, as her principal items of millinery, a faded blue sunbonnet for summers and a faded gray tricorner "fascinator" for winters.

She would have chosen to work stoutly from dawn to dusk; to do her own cooking, washing, mending, ironing,

churning, doctoring, and general red-ding up.

After a careful inventory, she would have chosen nothing else. The list covered her wants, expressed and implied. It was complete. And there was not an item on it that had not been supplied her by a Providence which, in this instance, at least, had done a thorough-going and painstaking job of providing.

And yet, with every desire to which she could give thought or expression well fulfilled, there was woven through the patternless dun-colored fabric of her being one fibre of that longing for—she knew not what. When Dalilah offered her nightly prayers of devout thanks for the manifold blessings of which she had been the recipient, she meant every word of what she said. Had she sought to pick a flaw in her destiny, she would have failed utterly. And yet—

* * * *

In the candidacy of Truxton Coburn there lay recognition of a supreme and peculiar merit of a strictly geographical nature. In all other respects, too, Coburn fitted admirably a situation which the leading political writers and thinkers were describing as one that was becoming acute. The "Dominant Democratic Faction" whose more Dominant Democrats had made Coburn the people's choice at a week-end conference held in a secluded fishing camp on the Gulf Coast, needed a man of Coburn's negative type for the gubernatorial campaign.

A deputy street commissioner, who was an important factor in the fishing-camp conference, first suggested Coburn's name. A close examination of Coburn's public record followed. When

this had been concluded, the recapitulation posted on the credit side of Coburn's political ledger read:

First: He had accomplished the all-important feat of having been born in Louisiana of a family in which his grandfather, a maternal uncle, and two paternal granduncles had fought ("gal-lantly," of course) on the side of the Confederacy.

Second: His father had done his share for "white supremacy" when, shouldering a shotgun in 1873 and 1874, he and his comrades had kept the negroes from the polls in the country parishes by force of arms, thus insuring, in those elections, the defeat of the carpetbaggers' black-and-tan ticket.

Third: He was a graduate of the Louisiana State University law school and not of the Tulane Law School or some eastern or northern college.

Fourth: He was married, and his children were attending, or had attended, public schools, not private schools.

Fifth: Neither he nor his parents had taken part in the effort of the Republicans, in 1896, to take advantage of the sugar tariff agitation to come back into power via a "Lily White" wing of the Republican party. Every male member of the Coburn family had been a true, loyal, unswerving, yellow-dog Democrat, and had "stamped the rooster" at every election in which he participated.

Sixth: Coburn's poll tax had always been paid regularly.

Seventh: As a member of the state senate, Coburn had voted right upon all measures affecting labor. He had voted for the ratification of the federal prohibition amendment during the special session of 1918—a fact which the hard-

shells of North Louisiana would recall to his credit, and which the joyous folk of South Louisiana were too busy to remember, because of their absorption in the effort of their congressional representatives to bring back light wine and beer. He had voted against the ratification of the federal woman's suffrage amendment, because he regarded it as fraught with danger to white supremacy in that it might extend the suffrage to negro women. He had voted for the mothers' pension and anti-gambling bills at the same session, however, thus insuring for himself a respectable share of the woman vote in spite of his open stand against the federal suffrage amendment.

Finally, he hailed from the no-man's zone of central Louisiana. This was a sacramental matter because two successive North Louisiana governors had thrown the free and untrammelled electorate of South Louisiana into open rebellion, while the northern parishes were quite determined not to relinquish any of their power. A candidate from either the northern or the southern parishes would have been the signal for the instant nomination of an opposition candidate from the rival section.

Two weeks after the fishing-camp conference, Truxton Coburn sent a modest announcement to the newspapers to the effect that in response to the continued solicitations of a host of his friends he had decided to submit his candidacy to the sovereign voters for the highest state office it lay in their hands to bestow. He opened his campaign at a mass meeting in New Orleans, at which occasion the deputy commissioner of streets was one of the lead-

ing orators, his mere presence on the Coburn platform being a good and sufficient pledge of the united support of the Dominant Democrats as against any Reform candidate who might be nominated by the opposition.

The campaign progressed from its initial state of polite enthusiasm along the quadrennial high road to plain frenzy. Reform orators denounced the payroll patriotism of the Dominant Democrats. The Dominant Democrats delivered whither-are-we-drifting homilies in which they took occasion to remark that the Reform Movement was devoid of interest and bankrupt in principle—a neat phrase which always took with the cheerleaders.

Coburn began his swing about the parishes, addressing meetings in court-houses, town halls, school houses, churches, and from general store galleries. The Coburn poster was considered a triumph of political photo-engraving. The man himself was undeniably handsome and the photographer whose work was transmuted to the posters had made the most of his subject. The well-shaped, clean-cut features, the sharply chiseled nose, the slim black mustache, and the slightly cleft chin were depicted faithfully enough. But the eyes—ah, that was the triumph! There lay in the eyes of that poster-pictured countenance a deep sympathy that reached out warmly to all of a sorrowing world. Eyes they seemed that were ready enough to dance an accompaniment to a smile, but that would hold an undefinable hint of *Weltschmerz* in their depths the while they danced. The engraver and the photographer were well paid. In newspaper advertisements,

from telephone poles, from billboards, hoardings, fence rails—everywhere the sorrowful, understanding, sympathetic eyes of Truxton Coburn looked down upon the voters.

One of the Dominantly Democratic faithful, in a north Louisiana parish, halting his poster-laden truck at a point where three main-traveled highways met, saw a good advertising point, and promptly tacked one of the Coburn posters to the trunk of a great, hairy pecan tree which stood at the confluence of the three roads.

Dalilah and Dave, it happened, were in town at the time. They saw the white speck of the poster from afar, as they came stuttering back along the road that faced the house that evening. Both gazed long at the Coburn features.

"Looks like the kind of a feller'd have oil on his hair," grumbled Dave at last.

Dalilah made no reply. It was a reflex of long years' development in her that accepted Dave's judgments blindly on matters of art, public affairs, literature and patent medicines. Moreover, the feeling that had tugged at her as she looked at the poster could not have been put into words. As the wise, kind, sorrowful eyes of the engraving caught hers and held them inescapably there came to her, poignant and sharp, a realization of that fibre of nameless longing that ran through all the solid, dun-colored fabric of her existence.

Through the days that followed, Dalilah came out often and looked deep into the poster-pictured eyes that were ready to smile through such a deep understanding of all sorrow. She looked from the pudgy brown hens that scratched and made a great to-do about

the bare yard, and from the two sleek porkers, rolling fat, into those wise, kind eyes, and each time there came to her that swift keening of the wordless longing that, throughout her life had tintured most of her waking hours and all of her dreams.

It was while Truxton Coburn, with his retinue of speakers and press correspondents was making his swing through the northern tier, delivering at schools, churches and crossroads stores the speech in which he said that the opposition movement was devoid of interest and bankrupt in principle, that he and his party, driving from a late afternoon engagement to a night meeting at the parish seat, came to the confluence of three main-traveled roads that merged about the base of a great pecan tree.

"Looky here, Senator," grinned one of the newspapermen who shared the candidate's ear. "They got it right out in front of the house for all the world to see how they stand, ain't they?"

The chairman of that parish's Dominant Democratic Club was also a passenger in the Coburn car, and as he saw the poster the reporter had pointed out, he ordered the machine halted.

"'Twon't do a bitta harm to get out and shake hands with 'em, Senator," he urged. "They're dam' good people. Everybody in this part of the parish knows Dave Robbin—an' he's got six children of voting age."

Just as Dalilah crossed to the brown house from the bark-thatched shed with her evening's supply of stovewood, the parish chairman of the Dominant Democrats and Truxton Coburn left the big car, and, after a moment's fumbling

with the latch of the gate, entered the bare yard.

"Where'll we find Dave, Mizz Robbin?" the parish chairman greeted her. "Looky who's stoppin' to say howdy to you folks. Mizz Robbin, lemme make you 'quainted with Senator Coburn, who's runnin' for governor."

To Coburn he turned and whispered:

"Pick up the stovewood and carry it in for her."

"Mighty proud to meet you, Mrs. Robbin," said Coburn in his best manner. "It certainly is mighty flattering to think of you having my picture right out in front of the house. Here—let me carry that for you. Mighty glad to do it."

As though he were assisting the wife of the president up the steps of the White House, Coburn leaned over and relieved Dalilah of the double armful of stove wood. Piling it into the hollow of his bent left arm, he extended his right hand, and seizing the limp right hand of Dalilah, shook it warmly.

"Mighty glad to know you, Mrs. Robbin, mighty glad," he repeated. "Where'll you like to have this wood put?"

"In the k-kitchen, sir," stammered Dalilah.

And into the kitchen—her kitchen—the great man strode, dumping the armful of stove lengths into the woodbox beside the old range.

"Dave's out in the field, but I'll call

him, if you'd like," volunteered Dalilah, searching wildly for something to say.

"No, reckon we won't have time to wait, Mizz Robbin," declared the parish chairman. "Whyn't you and Dave drive into town for the big meetin' tonight? Come, Senator, we'll be late's it is."

At the gate Truxton Coburn turned, and formally lifted his hat to the little woman, who stood on the front gallery, her hands tucked beneath the drapery of her faded gray calico apron. Not until after the party had driven out of sight along one of the three main-traveled roads, did it occur to Dalilah that she should have bowed in return.

Carefully withdrawing the tacks with which the poster was affixed to the peacan trunk, Dalilah took the picture and carried it into the house where, folding it once, she stowed it reverently in the lower armoire drawer in which she kept her few trinkets.

The fibre of longing that wove its way through the patternless, dun-colored fabric of her, glowed vividly tranquil, with a realization of fulfillment. Something—something not vouchsafed to the run of mortals—had happened in the life of Dalilah. Through many an evening, long after the election returns had shown Coburn overwhelmingly defeated by his Reform opponent, Dalilah thought blissfully of the time when a candidate for the governorship had carried the stovewood into the kitchen for her.

Sonnet to My Wife

By MAXWELL BODENHEIM.

They say that music is the squandered cry
Of starved emotions on a mountain-side,
And that celestial sweat is on their stride,
Flinging its tortured glint upon their shy
And wild sounds as they rush or creep to high
And liquid death on tops of sensual pride.
This children's rhapsody is like a bride
Who paints a sentimental kiss on sky.

Deride the shallow eloquence of sound
That throws its sighs and cries against the mind,
And listen to the cold voice of my wife.
Her music, cut by thought, makes a profound
Mosaic whose sardonic stones are lined
Into a question poised at noisy life.



Wedding Gifts

By PAUL ELDRIDGE.

I am gathering a large bouquet
Of weeds and dead leaves and long thorns,
For my soul, bride of Truth,
Upon her wedding day.
I am gathering a lapful of sharp-pointed stones
And deep sacks of mockery and laughter,
Confetti for the grand procession—
I am gathering dry faggots and heavy logs,
A thick rope, and a tall smooth pole,
For my soul, bride of Truth,
Upon her wedding day.

Stairs

By LAURA BENET.

THE angels' descent to Jacob was upon a ladder, but, in order to get to heaven we are told that we must climb golden stairs—not anything as light as rungs. Suffice it that we shall climb and climb and have no respite from climbing. Fate has so willed it. And, therefore, in preparation for this next world, endeavor to find your favorite scholar in Thompson or Sullivan streets, New York City.

Take the faded, dingy address scrawled on a slip of paper, in which the sevens look nines, and the fours like the ones, and drag your weary feet to the most crowded of the Italian apartment houses. Children are hurling themselves over the filthy front steps. The janitor's bell hangs limply by its socket, perennially out of order—of course. The janitor is away. And oh, Saint Lucia, which floor and room does your pet inhabit?

You begin by asking one of the children. You are answered by an incoherent monosyllable, "Fift." You toil up. On the fifth floor, the door at the head of the stairs on which you knock, flies open, and you are precipitated into a room in which paralytics and pepper dispute the mastery with macaroni and garlic. A strong-armed male in abbreviated shirt sleeves, is at the tub of clothes.

"Maria Corvelli, she live here?" He stares at you darkly and relapses further into the suds. "I say . . . which floor?" A bright-faced daughter of ten comes forward as interpreter. Seven-t, lady, numero 762."

You are promoted to two more back-breaking fights, smelling of bananas. The door of 762 is inhospitably locked and has a soiled paper label pasted upon it: "Family moved to eighth floor."

Just at this juncture a boy stops his whistling flight down the precipice to stare at you.

"Don't go in dere, lady. Dey gotta dipthery dis floor. Two's dead."

"Ah—no-o—" snarls another interested listener. "It is of de fourt' floor dey gotta de seekness! See-e-e, greeny." A violent fist fight is the prompt result of this difference of opinion.

Weak with hysterical laughter you lean against the wall. Suddenly a bright, gay voice like the thrill of a bird, joyously shouts, "Mine teacher, mine teacher!" and seven-year-old Maria in a brightly flowered hat, throws herself into your arms.

But even her charmed caresses cannot revive your aching feet and ankles! You might as well have made an endeavor to climb the giant's mountain of glass!

Reviews

THREE SOLDIERS

By JOHN DOS PASSOS.

(George H. Doran, 1921)

DESPITE the flagwavers who have roundly cursed it, John Dos Passos' "Three Soldiers" is thus far the only first rate, authentic picture of the war. Undeniably it is a stark, grim picture. As a novel I do not suggest it for drowsy afternoon reading on the summer veranda. However, for the ninety-eight odd millions who did not get into the Big Show and were forced to absorb the stalwart-American-youth-who-made-the-supreme-sacrifice pen drippings of the Coningsby Dawson school, it could be wisely chosen for a physic.

Briefly, it is a tale of three young men, each representative of distinct American classes. They get into the "machine," and from the early days in training camp, through the armistice in France and long after, they are dragged up and down the gamut of physical and mental irritation; cold, rain, mud, grease, sweat, ignorance, pettiness, bloodshed and chaos. It is a repulsive portrayal; perhaps the author's view may be called biased. Nevertheless he does not depict a single incident that did not actually occur. No wonder the respectable souls cry out. Mr. Dos Passos has snatched the thin romantic scarf from their pet illusion, so they obstinately refuse to believe it. Two years ago, *Smart Set's*

book reviewer observes, "Three Soldiers" could not have got by. If it had, it is reasonably certain that its author would have received his royalty check in Leavenworth. Which forces me to question the ultimate efficacy of such a book. I am unwittingly satisfied that a year from today, should a Marine on duty in Patagonia be ripped up the back by a native, the force of Mr. Dos Passos' message would be completely and conveniently forgotten. It would seem, that to the minds of the herd at large, such a book is too bad to be true.

There is only one point at which I parry with Mr. Dos Passos. In assembling his wits to present his picture he appears to have mislaid his sense of humor. Reflecting upon my own martial adventures, it occurs to me that, in spite of the hardship and the boredom, I had, periodically, quite a good time. By "good time" I do not mean guzzling cognac, ogling *mademoiselles*, and dancing with Red Cross workers in the leave areas, but simply, that in the midst of it, there were many moments when I laughed unrestrainedly at the travesty of the whole affair. The spectacle of "our boys" lined up for inspection in ill-fitting uniforms, while a commanding general whisks by with a flock of superfluous subordinates at his heels, was to me a joke, an unparalleled burlesque. To Mr. Dos Passos it was only pathetic.

ABRAHAM GOLDBERG.

IF WINTER COMES

By A. S. M. HUTCHINSON.
(*Little, Brown & Co., 1921*)

AN absorbing story, skillfully set forth in exquisite prose by the deft hand of an artist.

The England of the war, and the turbulent years just before, furnish the background for the book, and the theme, common and brilliant enough, is life. "Life," says the writer, "an odd business... Mysterious journey! Uncharted, unknown and, finally—but there is no finality! Mysterious and stunning sequel—not end—to the mysterious and tremendous adventure!... Odd affair! Mysterious and baffling conundrum to be mixed up in!... Life!"

The story tells of one Mark Sabre, lovable, tremendously interested in life, married to a woman whose narrowness and general snobbishness increase with the years, who despises her husband because she cannot understand him, who finds no mystery in life. "...one was born, one lived, one died. What was there odd about it?"

But for Mark the mystery is there, and he puzzles over it. And when his bewilderment is at its height, a Nona comes into his life, or rather, comes back into his life, and he is plunged into the struggle between his very real desire to be loyal to his wife and his passionate love for Nona. Comes the war with its changes and the story moves rapidly to an inevitable climax.

Mr. Hutchinson dares give his book a happy ending—a courageous thing in this day of realism. And yet his story has reality and inevitability; even the

characters of least importance seem vital, not mere marionettes.

Whether Shelley's lines, "...O Wind, if Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" suggested the story, or whether the finished story suggested the use of Shelley's words for title, they fit each other admirably.

A delightful book, on the whole; a book that will be talked about, a book that will be remembered.

RUTH BARKER.



HYMEN

By H. D.
(*Henry Holt & Co., 1921*)

IT is only fair to confess at the outset that a return to Greek and Roman classics is for me an adventure among ice bergs. Tragedy in the grandest manner and deep earthy humor and humanity may be there, but my particular pair of eyes sees only ridiculously stiff strutters shouting rhythms to unconvinced heavens, like ham-actors to the back seats in a jerk-water town. Cold, inflexible strutters of austere beauty perhaps, but a beauty which I admire with only obvious insincerity. The restraint which is classic gives me an "all thumbs" "dry skin" obsession, and I must bathe in the Russian and the French to get back to what my limited experience has fooled me into believing in life.

In the second place, I must confess

that H. D., of all the poets—not excepting those of the Greek Anthology—manages alone to melt down sufficiently this arctic period so that I tingle with the emotion of recognition and catch in the period something of

...the sudden heat,
beneath quivering of molten flesh,
of veins, purple as violets...

In a sense, therefore, H. D. holds the key that can open my locked eyes to a new glory. Through, and I change the figure, through the window of her eyes I glimpse a new life. Through the crystal of her poems an age which is at best for me largely flubdub and faded tinsel becomes authentic with warm gold and pulsing life. That's rather extreme, of course; but quite as true as the truth of my first paragraph.

H. D. is a master—or mistress, if you will—of throbbing color. She is not the robustous artist who slashes hot paints wildly; but she is a maker of mosaics, of minutely wrought mosaics which, once finished, burn into life. Bits of colored glass, say, pieced deftly together until the completed image becomes as compact, and as piercing in vitality as this,

...suddenly wind and thunder and swift rain,
till the scarlet flower is wrecked
in the slash of white hail.

Or as this,

...not honey, not the sweet
stain on the lips and teeth:
not honey, not the deep
plunge of soft belly
and the clinging of the gold-edged
pollen-dusted feet.

Or this,

The poppy that my heart was,
formed to bind all mortals,
made to strike and gather hearts
like flame upon an altar,
fades and shrinks, a red leaf
drenched and torn in the cold rain.

"Hymen," the title poem of this sheaf of verses printed in England, is a canticle, a play-poem, a rich blending of music, color and words—words that hold with a stranger rarer beauty both a music and a color their own. The other poems in the sheaf peddle more pleasure to me. Their classical allusions—and it is my own idiosyncrasy or ignorance, as you will; my span is short at best and art is long and quite indifferent in the end to what one Summett Gawn thinks—their classical allusions promise little. Once read, however, they are another Chapman's Homer to me. Try "Evadne", for example,

I first tasted under Apollo's lips
love and love sweetness,
I Evadne;
my hair is made of crisp violets
or hyacinth which the wind combs back
across some rock shelf;
I Evadne
was mate of the god of light.

His hair was crisp to my mouth
as the flower of the crocus,
across my cheek,
cool as the silver cress
on Eros bank;
between my chin and throat
his mouth slipped over and over.

Still between my arm and shoulder
I feel the brush of his hair,
and my hands keep the gold they took
as they wandered over and over
that great armful of yellow flowers.

And I might name any one of the others in this little green sheaf!

SUMETT GAWN.

AND EVEN NOW

By MAX BEERBOHM.

(E. P. Dutton Co., 1921.

ESSAYS written "in the course of the past ten years," says the genial Max. He apologizes a little. "Perhaps a book of essays ought to seem as if it had been written a few days before publication. On the other hand—but this is a Note, not a Preface."

A writer who can reveal a mellow personality in three lines of a note, need never apologize for the timeliness of his copy. The virtue in a journalist's copy is its timeliness. The virtue in a familiar essayist's is his own personality. And personality is no hand-maiden of one day or another. Personality, and I mean engaging personality, is of all time and always timely.

It has been said that this collection of papers is not quite up to the Beerbohm standard. There is a poignant uselessness about such speculation, if you read the books of Beerbohm through the man Beerbohm. Under certain conditions, I, for one, like my concept of the man Beerbohm better than anything he ever wrote or is likely to write. Consequently, however he writes, I like his writing—because he himself, like some rare Benedictine, grows mellow and richer the older he becomes. Humor, grace, satire, beauty, stand revealed in these essays. Sometimes the papers are broadly humorous as the one called "Kolnuyatsch," which treats of that master spirit of literature.

Was Kolnuyatsch mad? It depends on what we mean by that word. If we mean, as the bureaucrats of Ellis Island and, to their lasting shame, his friends and relations presumably meant, that he did not share our own smug and timid philosophy of life, then indeed was Kolnuyatsch not sane. Granting for sake of argument that he was mad in a wider sense than that, we do but oppose an insuperable stumbling-block to the Eugenists. Imagine what Europe would be today, had Kolnuyatsch not been. As one of the critics avers, "It is hardly too much to say that a time may not be far distant, and may indeed be nearer than many of us suppose, when Luntic Kolnuyatsch will, rightly or wrongly, be reckoned by some of us as not the least of those writers who are especially symptomatic of the early twentieth century and are possibly 'for all time' or for a more or less certainly not inconsiderable period of time." That is finely said.

Sometimes the essay is delicate in wit and satire. For example, "Hosts and Guests." I am tempted to quote from it but I am paid for my own and not for Beerbohm's words. Try the book itself. You'll recognize it at the book-stalls by the title. If you prefer historical literature, examine "No. 2. The Pines," which is a picture of Swinburne second not even to that one in Harris' "Contemporary Portraits," which series I have forgotten. Would you have "minted grief," turn to page 265 and read "William and Mary," an essay of honest tears. Or if you prefer "breadth of mind" and "tolerance" read "Laughter," the last paper in the book. I bow, with an excerpt, which you may have read in 1920:

That is the worst of these fashionable philosophers—or rather, the worst of me. Somehow I never manage to read them till they are just going out of fashion, and even then I don't seem able to cope with them... It distresses me, this failure to keep pace with the leaders of thought as they pass into oblivion. It makes me wonder whether I am, after all, an absolute fool. Yet surely I am not that. Tell me of a man or a woman, a place or an event, real or fictitious: surely you will find me a fairly intelligent listener. Any such

narrative will present to me some image, and will stir me to not altogether fatuous thoughts. Come to me in some grievous difficulty; I will talk to you like a father, even like a lawyer. I'll be hanged if I haven't a certain mellow wisdom. But if you are by way of weaving theories as to the nature of things in general, and if you want to try those theories on some one who will luminously confirm them or powerfully rend them, I must, with a hang-dog air, warn you that I am not your man. I suffer from a strong suspicion that things in general cannot be accounted for through any formula or set of formulae, and that any one philosophy, howsoever new, is no better than another. That is in itself a sort of philosophy, and I suspect it accordingly: but it has for me the merit of being the only one I can make head or tail of. If you try to expound any other philosophic system to me, you will find not merely that I can detect no flaw in it (except the one great flaw just suggested), but also that I haven't, after a minute or two, the vaguest notion of what you are driving at.

GEORGE Q. MOORE.



CUPID BLUSHES

MADAME MARGOT, by John Bennett.

(*Century Co.*, 1921.)

COLUMBINE TIME, by Will Irwin.

(*The Stratford Co.*, 1921.)

THESE are two brief tales—one can read either of them in an hour—of the “time of the year when all maids are sweet as freshly gathered flowers, and all men are a little mad.” Both are written by men old enough to look back on youth with a sad, wistful smile.

Both tales will make quite proper reading for the growing daughter. “Columbine Time,” baldly put, is the golden story of an irreproachable mother in a western town who tries to sell her daughter to Wealth. She doesn't succeed. Nellie grabs her own lover and preserves the precious purity her

faultless mother did her doggonedest to market. “Madame Margot,” baldly put, is a grotesque legend of a “Creole” mother of Charleston who, in order to keep her daughter chaste—the daughter's chastity is nowise threatened—sells her own soul to the devil. The devil, with characteristic irony, sends the daughter, Gabrielle, to a convent. Later Gabrielle compromises with her own heart and marries a wealthy planter. “Tho' her heart is still another's,” Gabrielle manages to preserve her purity by legally bearing the children of a man she doesn't love, and lives happily ever after.

In both books, you see, virtue triumphs. In “Madame Margot,” the mother being the devil's own now, comes to an unhappy end; and her daughter, loving another not her husband, enjoys official purity in legalized adultery, till death calls her. In “Columbine Time,” Nellie marries the youth she loves, but forces her mother to marry the Wealth her mother was unable to manoeuvre into buying Nellie.

Both will make delightful holiday gift books. Evangelists and all the Mrs. Propers will rejoice in them. I did myself. They are splendidly written, with a sufficient touch of satire—conscious or unconscious, I do not know—to take them well out of the class of Pollyanniana. Contemplating them, one is irritated into a kind of bitterness; not because of the books themselves—they are outwardly as wholesome as prudery could wish; but because of their indirect expression of the sliminess of contemporary thought, which accepts such books and which rejects “Jurgen.”

SUMETT GAWN.